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AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE DESIRABILITY  
OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO  
THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF ALBERTA

A THESIS  
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

BY

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EDMONTON, ALBERTA

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	Page
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
II.. WHAT IS RELIGIOUS EDUCATION? ...	6
III. HISTORY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN GREAT BRITAIN .....	13
IV. HISTORY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES .....	39
V. HISTORY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN CANADA .....	60
VI. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN ALBERTA TODAY .....	74
VII. IS RELIGIOUS EDUCATION THEORETICALLY SOUND? .....	85
VIII. IS RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PRACTICABLE? .....	152
IX. IS RELIGIOUS EDUCATION DESIRABLE IN ALBERTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS? .....	177
X. SOME POSITIVE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS STUDY .....	183
BIBLIOGRAPHY	
Books .....	191
Bulletins and pamphlets .....	193
Periodicals .....	196
APPENDIX .....	221

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The demand that religious education be put into the public schools is growing rapidly at the present time. In Great Britain, the United States and Canada, various groups are striving to have religion given a place in the schools. Here in Alberta, certain bodies are vitally interested in this problem today, some striving for religious education and some working against it. At the 1948 Convention of the Alberta School Trustees' Association, the following resolution was passed by the delegates:

"WHEREAS the School Act of Alberta now makes provision for setting aside of certain time during school hours for religious instruction, and WHEREAS many schools are staffed by teachers not trained to give such instruction;  
RESOLVED that the Department of Education be requested to make provision for proper training of teachers in the Faculty of Education to enable them to give the necessary instruction.

"RESOLVED that the Curriculum Committee of the Department of Education be requested to arrange a syllabus for simple Bible teaching in the schools." #

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# The Alberta School Trustee, Vol. XVIII, No. 9,  
(Oct. 1948), p. 11.

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On the other hand, at the Annual General Meeting



of the Alberta Teachers' Association the following resolution was referred to the Provincial Executive:

"Be it resolved: That this A. G. M. go on record as being opposed to any further extension of religious instruction in public schools." #

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# The Alberta Teachers' Association Magazine, Vol. 29, No. 2, (Nov. 1948), p. 38.

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These two quotations show that the question is a live one in the province today. One final quotation may complete the picture. This one, as reprinted in the A. T. A. Magazine, is taken from the Iacombe Globe and gives the point of view of one layman.

"Although religious study undoubtedly would be good moral training, it is too dangerous to be practised in the ordinary school curriculum. Most of us jealously guard our right to select and follow the religion of our choice. To be exposed as adults to the various philosophies of different religions is part of our religious education. But an immature school student might be unduly influenced by his teacher's beliefs, no matter how innocently they were put forward. Nor is there any guarantee that our school instructors today are qualified to pass judgment on the Bible's solemn teachings." #

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# Ibid., p. 8.

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This is an indication of the situation in Alberta at the present time. The fundamental aim of this thesis is to investigate the desirability of religious education in schools, with particular reference to Alberta.

The limiting of the scope of the subject by relating



it to this province does not make it less important, but, to persons interested in the field of education in Alberta, rather enhances its value. To put the situation in Alberta in its proper perspective it is necessary to examine the situation in the world today, and, to understand any part of the problem it is necessary to take a brief look at the history that led up to the conditions of the present. This historical overview of the topic is presented in three short history chapters near the beginning of this study.

The next logical point of attack in a thesis would be to present in brief form some of the more pertinent statistics on the subject, showing the results of former studies and interpreting them. However, there are no statistical studies on the topic of religious education which delve into the results of programs, for there are so many extraneous factors that a study on a statistical basis is rendered invalid before it is begun. One must deal entirely with opinion from one source or another, with a few facts here and there. This thesis is not a mere counting of pro and con opinions, however, for a definite attempt has been made to evaluate the whole situation on the basis of the arguments expressed in the literature on the topic, and a qualitative rather than quantitative estimate has been our objective.



Articles in periodicals proved to be the largest source of material for this study. Books, magazine articles, and letters from teacher associations, Departments of Education or their equivalents, representative seminaries, and interested individuals in each of Great Britain, United States and the other provinces of Canada made up the rest of the sources of general information. The subject is one that has had few books written on it that are valuable as far as the Alberta scene is concerned. Most of the material that dealt with this province was obtained from letters and questionnaires that were sent out late in 1948 to all divisional boards, A. T. A. Locals, and persons who had shown themselves interested in religious education. More information on the provincial situation came from the Alberta School Act, interviews and newspapers. After a picture of the whole situation had been obtained by a brief reading of periodicals and books, the history of the problem was studied to put the present situation in its proper perspective. Alberta became the next point of attack, and the provincial picture was studied to ascertain the exact position of religious education in Alberta schools at the present time. The legal aspect of the problem was obtained from the School Act. The sources of pressure for and against religious education were examined, with



their respective arguments and counter-arguments. The literature on the parallel part of the problem in Great Britain, the United States, and the rest of Canada was examined to determine whether these areas had anything that would shed further light on the Alberta problem. The aims and objectives of the various world pressure groups were evaluated as to their theoretical soundness; that is, to see if the arguments they submitted in favor of religious education would withstand scrutiny from the standpoint of theory. They were then examined as to practicality, first in their own locale and then as to their practicability in Alberta. What could be used from the schemes that had broken under examination? To assume that nothing would work because nothing had worked would not be sound. The final part of this thesis endeavors to present something constructive out of all the foregoing analysis, to offer a suggestion as to what might work if all the examined schemes failed to stand up.

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## CHAPTER II

### WHAT IS RELIGIOUS EDUCATION?

Literature on the subject affords many definitions of religious education, from clear, terse explanations to those wrapped in wooly, nebulous phraseology which only serves to cloud the original term. These definitions are given from the viewpoint of the child, from that of the parent, from that of the teacher and even from that of the curriculum, and deal with matters ranging from how a religious education program should be conducted to what it should accomplish.

Why is there such a range of possible meanings of the term, religious education? Each meaning is based on individual differences; that which constitutes religious education for one person may mean nearly the opposite for his neighbor. As there is no hard, cold, definition for religious education, the next few pages will be devoted to a survey of some popular definitions and a discussion of them, in an attempt to find one suitable for use throughout this thesis.

An article by R. A. Smith# on the subject negates

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# R. A. Smith, "Distinctive Province of Religious Education", Religious Education, (Oct. 1927), pp. 863 ff.

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the term, religious education, completely. There is



no such thing, according to that particular writer. Education is education, and the inclusion of religion in the curriculum does not make it religious education. This argument does not impress one as being much more than quibbling over words, but other writers# put

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# Cf. G. H. Betts, "What Makes Education Religious", Religious Education, (April 1923), pp. 84 ff.

Cf. L. A. Weigle, "What Makes Education Religious", Religious Education, (April 1923), pp. 90 ff.

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forth an argument with real significance. It is the idea that education is education and if it is good education, it is religious. If education makes the individual a constructive, up-building force in society, a person who practices decency, kindness, forbearance, justice, honesty and democratic ideals, then that education is religious.

Closely paralleling this line of thought is the definition of religious education as non-sectarian, non-timetabled religion permeating the whole curriculum and the very atmosphere of the school. In such a program there would be no formal teaching of religion, but incidental religious teaching would be going on all the time. This is one of the most favored illustrations of religious education#; in other words,

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# Cf. L. E. Cabot, "Unsectarian Religion for Our Schools", Religious Education, (February 1924), pp. 39 - 44.



Cf. L. Goldman, "The Implications of Religious Instruction in Public Schools", Education, (January 1939), pp. 257 ff.

Cf. L. P. Jacks, "Religion in the Timetable", National Education Association Journal, (January 1948), p. 8.

Cf. V. O. Ward, "How Correlated Week-day Activities Promote Religious Experience", Religious Education, (April 1925), pp. 123 ff.

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it is what many people would like to see in the schools.

In an Alberta school not long ago a travelling missionary approached a row of small children and asked:

"Are there any sinners here?" The whole row of little heads shook in negation. "Has no one here ever told their Mummy a lie?" The denials were less vociferous the second time, and finally one little girl admitted telling a lie. "Ah, I thought so", said the missionary. Soon the whole class was convinced that they had all sinned.## To some people,

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# This incident was taken from a school official's letter now in the authors' files.

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this incident exemplifies religious education.

Some persons state bluntly that religious education is the teaching of the child to live his life for God.##

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# Cf. A. E. Bennett, "What Makes Education Religious", Religious Education, (April 1923), pp. 88ff.



Cf. W. Fallaw, "Uniting Home and Church for Religious Teaching", School and Society, (March 18, 1944), pp. 195 ff.

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Very few writers include the idea of 'living for God' in a definition of religious education, except those who advocate that such a life should be according to given dogmatic principles. In other words, many people would accept this definition if the child was to be taught according to their own sectarian beliefs. #

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# Cf. S. F. Bacon, "Character Education", Catholic World, (July 1935), pp. 483-4.

Cf. O. Brady, "Catholic Education", Religious Education, (June 1928), pp. 540-5.

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The part the teacher must play in religious education is often incorporated in definitions of that education, and occasionally is used to form the major part of the definition, as in "Religion in the Public School" when Blashfield# says:

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# H. Blashfield, "Religion in the Public School", Religious Education, (June 1926), pp. 290-292.

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"We need and must have religious teachers, teachers who have had experience and training in religion so that they themselves are religious and can therefore give a religious interpretation to what they teach. ...When our teachers leave their training schools, they should carry with them to their work religious appreciations and values which will influence and motivate them as they work with the children."

1. The first part of the report is devoted to a general survey of the situation in the country.

2. The second part of the report is devoted to a detailed analysis of the economic situation in the country.

3. The third part of the report is devoted to a detailed analysis of the social situation in the country.

4. The fourth part of the report is devoted to a detailed analysis of the political situation in the country.

5. The fifth part of the report is devoted to a detailed analysis of the cultural situation in the country.

6. The sixth part of the report is devoted to a detailed analysis of the international situation in the country.

While the part the teacher must play in religious education can hardly be over-emphasized, such a role is not religious education in itself, but simply an indispensable part of the whole. As to what the rest of that whole should be, the foregoing definitions may illustrate. One final addition may also help. Many people are agreed that religious education should be a non-sectarian, separate course, non-evangelical, non-dogmatic, in which religion is defined generically and in terms of its world sweep: Shintoism, Buddhism, Zoroasterianism, Christianity and others all having equal emphasis.##

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# Cf. W. C. Bagley, "New Proposal for Religious Education in England", School and Society, (September 4, 1943), pp. 159 ff.

Cf. E. C. Cunningham, "An Approach to the Question", Phi Delta Kappan, XXVIII, (Dec. 1946), pp. 167 ff.

Cf. W. Fallaw, "Where is Religious Education Now?", Christian Century, (January 21, 1948), pp. 74-76.

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In the School Act of the Province of Alberta, the following provisions are made:

"All schools shall be opened by the reading, without explanation or comment, of a passage of scripture to be selected from those prescribed or approved for that purpose by the Minister, to be followed by the recitation of the Lord's Prayer:

"Provided that any Board may, by resolution, dispense with the scripture reading or the recitation of the Lord's Prayer or both." #

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# The School Act, Department of Education, Province of Alberta, Sec. 156, p. 58.

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"No religious instruction shall be permitted in any school from the opening of the school until one half-hour previous to its closing in the afternoon, after which time any such instruction permitted or desired by the Board may be given. #

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# Ibid., Sec. 157, p. 58.

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The foregoing illustrations can be classified into three main types.

(1) The first type includes the compulsory exercises stipulated in the Alberta School Act, and consists of prayer and reading of the Scriptures without comment. Those persons who are championing the cause of religious education in Alberta feel that this type is desirable, but most of them also feel that such instruction is not enough.

(2) The second type consists largely of sectarian instruction in, and interpretation of, the Christian religion. This is the most common of the three types, and has many minor variations. Several sects may co-operate and arrange a syllabus which is agreeable to themselves. Within the group, such a syllabus may be considered non-sectarian; outside the group it must be classed as sectarian.

(3) The third type consists of the impartial and objective study of all the great religions, with the aim of understanding them and the people who adhere to them.



As the first type is compulsory in Alberta at the present time, it does not require examination here. The only argument against it is advanced by many people for either of two reasons. Some feel that it is inadequate and for that reason it should be discarded. Others feel that it is inadequate and that it should be reinforced by the introduction of the second type mentioned above.

Because the third type of religious education, consisting of a study of all religions, is not common in public schools, consideration of this problem has been deferred to the last chapter.

Religious education of a sectarian nature is the type of religious instruction which is most common today, and around which most of the controversy arises. It is to this type of religious education that reference is made in the remainder of this thesis, exclusive of the final chapter. If occasionally another type is mentioned, that type will be explained specifically.

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### CHAPTER III

#### A BRIEF HISTORY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN GREAT BRITAIN, THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

In a study of the present status of religious education in Great Britain, the United States and Canada, terms recur throughout the literature which need clarification. Terms such as 'combined syllabuses', 'the Cowper-Temple clause', 'released time', 'dismissed time', 'the principle of separation', 'parochial schools', 'provided schools', and 'the Anson By-law' are scattered through the material, used as if they were household words, but which require clarification for the ordinary reader. Besides the question of terminology, the literature raises other problems as well. Why have the programs of dismissed and released time developed to such a degree in America, while in Britain combined syllabuses are more popular; how has the Canadian picture become a composite of both? To answer such questions as these, a brief study of the history of the development of religious education in these three countries is necessary. Three chapters are now devoted to a brief examination of the path religious education has followed in Great Britain, the United States and Canada.



HISTORY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
IN GREAT BRITAIN

England and Wales

For at least a thousand years in England and Wales there has been a close connection between religion and education. This is shown by the events of that period, leading from complete control of the educational system by the Church (Catholic) in the Middle Ages, to the passing of the Education Act of 1944 wherein the Government declared that "the school day in every county school and in every voluntary school shall begin with collective worship on the part of all pupils in attendance at the school".# This

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# Education Act, 1944, Part Two, Section 25 (1)

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transition over the centuries from Church control to State domination has been a painful one; it has occupied a large place in public speculation, and taken a great deal of Parliamentary time, especially in the last 150 years. To outline in detail the various steps in the transition would occupy many volumes, for Church and State, denominational rivalries, and individual freedoms have all become involved in religion and education. All that this chapter can do, then, is to trace briefly the broad changes that have

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The first of the three main sections of the report is devoted to a general survey of the state of research on the subject of the influence of the environment on the development of the individual. This section is divided into three parts: (a) the influence of the physical environment, (b) the influence of the social environment, and (c) the influence of the cultural environment. The second section is devoted to a detailed study of the influence of the physical environment on the development of the individual. This section is divided into three parts: (a) the influence of the physical environment on the development of the individual, (b) the influence of the physical environment on the development of the individual, and (c) the influence of the physical environment on the development of the individual. The third section is devoted to a detailed study of the influence of the social environment on the development of the individual. This section is divided into three parts: (a) the influence of the social environment on the development of the individual, (b) the influence of the social environment on the development of the individual, and (c) the influence of the social environment on the development of the individual.

The fourth section is devoted to a detailed study of the influence of the cultural environment on the development of the individual. This section is divided into three parts: (a) the influence of the cultural environment on the development of the individual, (b) the influence of the cultural environment on the development of the individual, and (c) the influence of the cultural environment on the development of the individual. The fifth section is devoted to a detailed study of the influence of the physical environment on the development of the individual. This section is divided into three parts: (a) the influence of the physical environment on the development of the individual, (b) the influence of the physical environment on the development of the individual, and (c) the influence of the physical environment on the development of the individual. The sixth section is devoted to a detailed study of the influence of the social environment on the development of the individual. This section is divided into three parts: (a) the influence of the social environment on the development of the individual, (b) the influence of the social environment on the development of the individual, and (c) the influence of the social environment on the development of the individual. The seventh section is devoted to a detailed study of the influence of the cultural environment on the development of the individual. This section is divided into three parts: (a) the influence of the cultural environment on the development of the individual, (b) the influence of the cultural environment on the development of the individual, and (c) the influence of the cultural environment on the development of the individual.

occurred as far as religious education in schools in England and Wales is concerned.

Education in England was under ecclesiastical control for centuries. "In England, the monasteries were the early places of education, and later, following the lines of the Continental Church system, when bishoprics were organized and cathedrals established, a school formed part of the cathedral establishment. Here one of the clerks of the bishop ... taught." #

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# A. E. Ikin, "The State and Religious Education in Great Britain and Ireland", The Year Book of Education, p. 231

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After the Norman conquest, the Church endeavored to retain her control of educational matters and a custom developed that the Bishop granted a license authorizing a person to teach, and only those who held such a license could teach. By 1400, however, other persons were setting up schools despite threats and actual sentences of excommunication. Because of persecution these teachers began proceedings in the London City Courts for permission to teach without the consent of the ecclesiastical authorities. In 1410, as the result of a case in this court, it was ruled that a person could not be punished for teaching without a license from the Church. Soon after this we find evidence of private endowments being made

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(e.g., to Sevenoaks Grammar School in 1432) on the condition that a schoolmaster, not a priest, should preside in the school.

In the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries there was a slow growth of reaction against the Catholic Church and the authorities used repressive measures in an attempt to stamp it out. Parliament, in 1401, forbade any sect (e.g., Lollards) to found churches or schools; in addition, Wyclif's books were banned from any educational institution. The State was taking a more active interest in religious education.

With the Reformation, education came to be dealt with by the State for political purposes. In schools which were established or re-established during the Reformation period, the study of the Bible was generally included as a fundamental part of the curriculum. The national feeling against the possibility of subjection to a foreign power increased the feeling in favor of the changed religious outlook. The Reformation thus introduced a new basis for elementary education, the necessity of personal study of the Scriptures in order to secure salvation. It was considered by the Reformers that the reading of the Bible in the language of the people was essential, fundamental and necessary, while in the view of the Church of Rome the Bible was only



accessory or supplementary. # We may surmise that

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# Ibid., p. 235.

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in the pre-Reformation schools the scholars received a traditional indoctrination in Catholic beliefs and practices.

During the reign of Edward VI Parliament decreed that once a week the clergyman in each parish should instruct the children of that parish in their Catechism. This is one of the earliest examples of a state legislating compulsory education, the instruction being religious and given by the Established Church.

From the time of the Reformation until the 1900's Roman Catholic education may more easily be considered as a separate section. After the Reformation Catholics were a persecuted minority and this persecution, as well as the Catholic tradition in education, resulted in the growth of a separate Roman Catholic school system. No Catholic schools existed from Elizabeth's time till that of James II when a few schools were established. Most of these were closed when James was deposed; the only school which could claim continuity from that period was a school at Twyford, near Winchester. This school later became St. Edmund's College. Another school was founded in 1762 at Sedgely



Park. With the exception of these two schools, all other schooling of Catholic gentry took place on the Continent where English Catholics had established schools of their own.

With Catholic emancipation in 1829, and the Irish famine of 1846, together with the moral and intellectual force of Manning and Newman (of the Oxford Group movement) Catholic education entered into a new period. After 1829 a large number of secondary schools were opened, many of them convents for girls. Although Catholic elementary schools received grants in 1849, it was not until 1902 that any Catholic secondary schools began to receive Board of Education grants. In these schools, as in the Catholic elementary system, the standards and the methods do not differ much from Protestant or council secondary schools, but a certain consciousness of different tradition is jealously preserved. The President of the Annual Conference of Catholic Colleges in 1936 thus defined the difference: "Our boys are to preserve trust faithfully; they must feel not merely equality, but a sense of difference, a sense of superiority of their Catholic culture, a conviction that they hold a key position containing the adequate and ultimate solution of all problems. They must be wary of the corroding acid of neo-pagan



contact, and without being prigs or recluses, look upon themselves as a race apart." #

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# N. Hans, "Educational Traditions in The British Commonwealth of Nations and The United States of America," The Year Book of Education, 1938, p. 750.

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The Irish immigration into English industrial centres after the 1846 famine in Ireland changed the Roman Catholic position in education. The elementary education of the poor or of children of the industrial group had not been so important before, because Catholic educators had been dealing with people of the middle or upper classes able to afford private tuition for their children. The few Catholic elementary schools in existence now had to be augmented by many others in order to handle the Irish children. In 1847 the Catholic Poor School Committee was formed, and succeeded in 1849 in getting its first Government grant on equal terms with the National Society and the British and Foreign Schools which had been receiving grants since 1833. When attendance for all children of elementary school age became compulsory in 1870, Catholics were able to build enough schools to accommodate all Catholic children able and willing to attend. Thus Catholic children were saved from having to go to the undenominational Board schools. In the Catholic elementary schools at present "the standards,



the methods, the teachers and the inspectors are the same as in other elementary schools, the only difference being a special religious atmosphere, which is often lacking in the provided (i.e. government) schools." #

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# Ibid., p. 749.

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The Industrial Revolution created changes in the British educational system. One of the effects of the Revolution was that it forced people to live in great concentrations of population. The children of the poor ran the streets or sweated in workshops, mills and factories. "Although there was provision in many endowed Grammar Schools for the education of the poor, there was little in the way of real elementary education. By the end of the eighteenth century there were already many Parish and Dame schools, but the Charity and Sunday schools were more influential and more important. The former, mainly established by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, did some good work at the end of the century, and the latter, originally founded by Robert Raikes in 1780, did not confine themselves to religious teaching, but taught reading, writing, and sometimes, cyphering." #

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# United Kingdom Information Office, Education in Britain, (Revised pamphlet), p. 5.

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Public opinion about the condition and ignorance of the apprentices developed and in 1802 Parliament passed an act on their behalf. It specified that apprentices should get one hour of instruction in the 'Principles of the Christian Religion' every Sunday; the Master or Mistress of the apprentices was to pay the teacher, and the instruction, for the most part, was assumed to be under the guidance of the Anglican Church. However, even this one hour of instruction was avoided by the owners; they criticized the Act as 'harsh', 'aggressive', and 'impracticable'. #

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# A. E. Ikin, "The State and Religious Education in Great Britain and Ireland," The Year Book of Education, p. 242.

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About this time two societies for promoting elementary education came into being; they depended upon subscriptions and small fees to run their schools. In order to economize, and yet contact the largest number of children possible, they adopted the 'monitor' system whereby the teacher instructed older boys and girls of the school and these monitors instructed the other children. One society was the 'National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church'. As its name suggests, the National Society was an Anglican organization, having as one of its main aims the



instructing of children in Anglican principles. The other society, the 'British and Foreign Schools Society' (1808) was founded largely to advance the educational ideas of a Quaker, Joseph Lancaster. In British and Foreign schools, open to children of any sect, Bible reading constituted the only formal religious education given to the children.

Representatives of the two factions fought for over half a century, both in Parliament and out, about various religious questions. "There were deep rooted differences: ... on the one side men who regarded instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic, with simple Bible reading without note or comment, as one of the greatest needs of the day; on the other side were men equally honest and desirous for children's education, but who considered that religious education in the principles and customs of the Church of England was of far more value than other forms of more secular instruction. ... Soon these differences developed into the question of whether the State should provide education or whether education was not similar to preaching and entirely a matter for the Church to deal with." #

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# Ibid., p. 243.

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In 1807 and 1833, attempts were made through Parliamentary bills to have a state education system set up, but Church opposition was too great. An 1820 bill with the same purpose fell into disfavor for opposite reasons because it contained clauses saying that the schoolmasters of the proposed national system should be members of the Established Church.

In August of 1833, though, a grant of \$8,000 was made to aid education. Both the National and British and Foreign School Societies were able to draw on the fund, but only when they wished to build schools. By 1839 other groups were building schools so a Committee of the Privy Council was appointed by Queen Victoria to administer government grants to education, and to arrange for inspection of schools.

Various bills in Parliament between 1837 and 1870 attempted to set up government normal schools or a state-controlled system of education, but the 'religious' battles forced withdrawal of the bills. In 1847 State aid was extended to Methodist and Roman Catholic schools and to Jewish schools in 1851.

By the Education Act of 1870 (relating only to elementary education), a national system of education was organized alongside the voluntary,



or church-supported systems, which continued to be given State grants. Thus, the 'dual' system came into being. In the new government Board schools (i.e. under the authority of a School Board), religious instruction was separated from the other subjects by being definitely time-tabled either for the beginning or the end of the school daily session; if the Board wished religious instruction in their school or schools then the teachers had to give that instruction. Parents were free to withdraw their children from the period of religious instruction - but not from the school. In order to avoid the possibility of Anglican or Roman Catholic doctrines being given in the religious education period, the famous Cowper-Temple clause was included in the Act; "No religious catechism or religious formulary which is distinctive of any particular denomination shall be taught in the school." # This, naturally, did

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# Ibid., p. 248.

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not apply to schools not provided by the local Education Authority.

In addition, to remove all risk of the State interfering with religious instruction anywhere, the school inspectors were now to examine schools



only with regard to the secular instruction given. Previously, inspectors in areas where there were Anglican schools were appointed only with the concurrence of the Archbishop of the Province in which the schools were situated, and the inspectors had made yearly reports to the Archbishop.

By the Education Act of 1902, the School Boards were abolished and the County Councils, County Borough Councils and certain Borough and Urban Councils were made the Local Education Authorities (LEA's). These LEA's became responsible for all education below the Universities. They were to help maintain, out of taxes, government schools and also grant money to voluntary schools. Where the LEA gave such a grant it expected to appoint two of the school's six 'managers'; the religious instruction was placed in the hands of these managers, not of the clergyman or priest. Though denominational authorities had some say in the character of the religious instruction, the mode was left entirely to the discretion of the managers.

The Anson By-Law, formulated for guidance of the newly-formed LEA's and optional for each LEA, allowed parents to send their children to school only when secular instruction was being given. This withdrawal could only be made if the parent wished the child to



have religious instruction in his own church or some other place (at the same time as the religious instruction was being given in the school). It was not very practical in small rural or urban school areas and a partial solution of the problem was found later in 'agreed syllabuses'.

"In 1922 the Cambridgeshire Education Committee, wishing to give greater fullness and educational efficiency to the religious instruction in its schools, called together a group of Biblical and theological scholars representative of work in elementary and secondary schools and members of the Authority itself to devise a Syllabus, which it issued in 1924. Taking the Cowper-Temple clause (of the 1870 Education Act) to mean what we have seen that its authors intended (i.e. Christian, but not denominational teaching) the compilers of the Syllabus sought to discover how much the Churches had in common, and what might therefore legitimately be taught. The extent of agreement was unexpected and inspiring. The basis of the Syllabus was the Bible, the oecumenical Creeds, the story of the Christian Church, Christian ethics, and of course, Christian worship. While prepared for the guidance of teachers in the elementary schools in the first instance, the Syllabus did in fact provide for all



By agreeing to use one of these syllabuses in voluntary (church) schools the LEA's were increasingly able to take over control of these schools. For this reason the number of Anglican schools, for example, fell between 1901-1938 from 11,552 to 8,979.

By the 1936 Education Act the government moved a little nearer complete control of the school system, because in return for tax-aid in building Anglican or Roman Catholic secondary schools, the LEA's were empowered to appoint all teachers in these schools except for a few teachers who were to give religious education in the tradition of the school. The LEA might also stipulate that as a 'term' of a grant agreed syllabus instruction should be given in a voluntary school so aided (i.e. in voluntary schools other than Roman Catholic). The LEA could also force voluntary schools to give agreed syllabus instruction if there were children in the voluntary school who desired such instruction, but who could not conveniently attend a provided school. This, again, did not affect Catholic schools because only Catholic children attended them. Parents continued to be allowed to withdraw their children from school religious instruction if they could satisfy the LEA that at the time-tabled period of such instruction their children were



age groups up to 16 and the material was selected and arranged to suit the developing powers of children year by year from infancy to early adolescence, so that by the time the pupil left school he should have a clear grasp of the contents of the Bible and the elements of the Christian faith in outline and should have been trained in the practice of worship. The Cambridgeshire Syllabus was adopted by a large number of other Authorities, and speedily some of the greater Authorities produced Syllabuses of their own, on similar lines, which also found favor elsewhere. By 1939 there were few of the Authorities which were not using one or other of the well-known Syllabuses - the Cambridgeshire, the West Riding of Yorkshire, the Cumberland, the new Surrey - and several of the pioneer ones had been revised and developed, notably in respect of their doctrinal content. In 1945 a national basic outline of religious instruction was prepared as a guide for Agreed Syllabus Committees by a committee of representatives of The Joint Conference of Anglicans and Free Churchmen, the Association of Education Committees and The National Union of Teachers." #

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# B. A. Yeaxlee, Religion in English Secondary Education, a pamphlet, p. 477 - 478.

See appendix for the national basic outline of religious instruction prepared by the above committee.

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receiving competent religious instruction elsewhere.

By 1939, then, the situation was briefly this:

(1) Agreed Syllabus arrangements were helping to reduce the number of Protestant voluntary schools.

(2) The Government was working towards a system that would include as many schools as possible.

(3) The teachers objected to the Dual system because they had to face religious tests when seeking positions in any of the many voluntary schools.

(4) The voluntary schools would not agree to the surrender of their schools until they could get satisfactory guarantees as to future religious instruction in those schools.

(5) The Catholics and Anglo-Catholics, not being able to accept agreed syllabus procedure, were still protesting that their supporters were carrying too heavy a financial load in supporting two school systems.

The Education Act of 1944 brought about the most recent changes in the British educational system.

These changes are concisely stated in a recent pamphlet.##

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# United Kingdom Information Office, "Education in Britain", Revised pamphlet (Ottawa, May, 1948), pp. 12, 26.

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"The Act provides that the school day in every state-aided Primary and Secondary School shall begin with a collective act of worship, and that religious instruction shall be given in all these schools for all children attending. The Conscience Clause has naturally been retained; and at the request of parents, children may be excused from attending. The LEA may also allow parents to withdraw their children, and send them to another County (i.e. government) or Voluntary School for religious worship and instruction of a kind that they desire their children to have, or they may allow the parents to make other arrangements, satisfactory to the LEA, for the religious instruction of their children during the school day. Where children are withdrawn for religious instruction on these conditions, it must not be to the prejudice of their secular instruction... .

"The religious instruction and worship in any County School must not be 'distinctive of any particular religious denomination', but must be conducted in accordance with an Agreed Syllabus. The Act made special provision for the drawing up of such a syllabus. Each LEA was to convene a conference, on which should be represented the Church of England (except in Wales and Monmouth), other important religious groups in the area, teachers' associations, and the Authority itself. The work of this conference was to frame a non-sectarian syllabus acceptable to the Churches and to the Authority, which could then be adopted and used in all the County Schools in the area, and in the Voluntary Schools when necessary. The syllabus is expected to be used by teachers only as a guide. The LEA's also have power to appoint standing advisory councils on religious matters connected with religious instruction, whose function is particularly to give help and advice to the teachers.

"In many areas, similar syllabuses had been in use for several years before the Act, and this is one more instance where common practice has been given statutory force.

"All the teaching in the County Schools must be undenominational. In particular cases,



however, in County Secondary Schools where the school is not near a Voluntary Secondary School of a particular religious denomination to which parents of children in the County School belong, the LEA may provide facilities for instruction and worship in that denomination, so long as the denomination, and not the LEA, bears the full responsibility for any cost involved.

"For the Voluntary Schools not able to maintain themselves financially the Act has offered the choice of the following alternatives:

(1) If the managers of the school are unable or unwilling to pay half the cost of alterations and improvements necessary to bring the buildings up to the required standards, and to keep them to that standard, all financial obligations pass to the LEA. The LEA will also assume the power to appoint and dismiss teachers, but the managers have the right both to a voice in the appointment of a headmaster or headmistress, and to be satisfied concerning the appointment of a proportion of the teachers (not more than one-fifth of the teaching staff), who as 'reserved' teachers, may give denominational instruction for not more than two periods a week for those children whose parents desire it. Apart from this denominational teaching, the religious instruction given in the school will be according to an Agreed Syllabus. Schools in this category are now known as 'Controlled Schools'.

(2) If the managers of a Voluntary School are able and willing to meet half the cost of necessary alterations and improvements, the remaining half is met by a direct grant from the Ministry. The powers and duties of the managers in the appointment and dismissal of teachers and the giving of denominational instruction remain substantially as they were before the Act, but religious instruction according to an Agreed Syllabus must be given to children whose parents so desire it. Schools in this category are known as 'Aided Schools'.

"For the first time, the religious beliefs of the teachers are taken into consideration. No teacher may be penalized in any way for his religious beliefs or absence of them. Nor may any teacher be compelled to attend collective worship or to give religious instruction. Managers of Voluntary Schools and the LEA's may,



of course, take into consideration the religious tenets of teachers when making appointments for staff in Aided schools, and for reserved teaching positions in Controlled or Special Agreement Schools.

"The wording of the Act made it quite clear that the religious instruction should be regarded as a normal part of the school day. Regular inspection of religious instruction by His Majesty's Inspectors is provided for in all schools which abide by an Agreed Syllabus. Voluntary Schools which do not observe an Agreed Syllabus may make their own arrangements for the inspection of religious instruction."

A brief summary of the points in this chapter may clarify the material covered.

The first schools were under Church jurisdiction and were taught by clergymen.

The next schools were still under Church influence but had laymen as teachers, though many of the first type of schools were still in existence.

After the Reformation the Church of England monopolized education and repressed (as had the Catholic Church) other religious groups interested in education. The Anglican schools were mainly for members of the upper classes.

Much later both the Established Church and humanitarian interests began elementary schools for the poor.

The state finally granted money to these groups and had to follow it with control in the form of a



Committee of the Privy Council (the forerunner of the Ministry of Education).

A long battle ensued between proponents of state control and church control of education.

A compromise was reached whereby a 'dual' system was set up - church and state schools.

Religious education was allowed in state schools, but because of denominational conflicts and secular pressure all sectarian instruction was prohibited in state-supported schools. The teacher was to give the religious instruction; no right of entry could be had by clergymen or priests.

The church schools, needing and receiving government grants and tax aid, had to reciprocate by yielding partial control of their school management to the LEA's.

This control eventually extended to partial control of the mode of religious education given in some church schools.

A number of the non-Catholic groups compromised on the question of sectarian differences by working out Agreed Syllabuses for those Voluntary Schools where they had to yield control to the LEA.

The government eventually adopted the plan of agreed syllabuses for all schools under its control.



Voluntary Schools (Anglican, Roman, Catholic, Methodist, etc.) are in most instances still free to give their own sectarian instruction.

The British Government (with respect to England and Wales) is, in a sense, in the same position as was the Catholic Church and later the Church of England, in that it actively supports a form of religious education in the schools of the land.

### Scotland

"In England, as shown in the earlier part of the present survey, the religious question has loomed large for a century and a quarter whenever education matters have been under consideration, but as far as Scottish educational matters are concerned the religious question has been raised very seldom during that period, either in Parliament or locally. This is due to the fact that controversies within the Church of Scotland have not arisen out of matters of faith, but out of practical questions of Church government, and of the relations of Church and State; whereas in England, questions of faith and belief have loomed large and the emotional feelings of the disputants have been aroused." #

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# A. E. Ikin, "The State and Religious Education in Great Britain and Ireland", The Year Book of Education, (1940), p. 259.

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In 1696 an Act was passed setting up a parish school system to be supported by the heritors and the Kirk-session. This Church influence has continued to the present day. In these early parish



and burgh schools the Bible and the Westminster Shorter Catechism were the texts upon which the teacher based 'cultural' education.

By the 1872 Education Act for Scotland, popularly elected schools boards were to take over the management of parish and burgh schools with power to give religious instruction. Consequently, in these Board schools the old texts continued to be used. The time for religious instruction was to be timetabled before or after regular work, children were to have a right of withdrawal, inspectors were not to be concerned with religious education and a majority of voters might vote to discontinue religious instruction in schools in their area. Almost all the public schools in Scotland were transferred to these Boards; only a few Episcopal and Roman Catholic church schools remained outside, forming a 'dual' system.

The 1918 Education Act ended the 'dual' system by transferring church schools to the jurisdiction of the education authorities, the school boards. Schools that did not comply with the Act ceased to receive government grants. Schools transferred were allowed to retain their denominational character and the teachers were all appointed by the education authorities with the reservation that teachers thus



appointed had to be approved by representatives of the church body concerned. The time set apart for religious instruction, in these cases, was not to be less than given before transfer. In addition, a supervisor of religious education was to be appointed by each education authority to report on the quality of religious education given in the area under the authority's jurisdiction. New denominational schools might also be established under these conditions with the consent of the Scottish Education Department. School inspectors, as in the 1872 Act, continued to have nothing to do with the religious instruction given in any Board school.

Under the Education (Scotland) Act of 1945 parents continue to have the right of withdrawal for their children and inspectors continue to inspect only secular school subjects. One change, however, is that the traditional half hour of religious instruction may now be given at any time during the school day. The religious instruction is also now a matter for which education authorities are expected to make arrangements at all levels of education; what was once optional is now obligatory. In addition, under the Act the existing custom in many Scottish schools of 'Services of Praise and Worship' is recognized.

In 1947, because of the greatly increased numbers



of students at teacher training colleges the churches had great financial difficulty in maintaining lecturers in religious education at the four teacher training centers. The State, therefore, took over from the churches the responsibility for the optional religious education courses given to student teachers. The lecturers will be appointed by the State subject to consultation with the Church of Scotland and the Free Churches.

Various groups in Scotland have also come together in recent years to work out agreed syllabuses. The Joint Committee on Religious Education, for example, representing the Scottish Churches, the Educational Institute of Scotland, and the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland, has published syllabuses of religious instruction. These have been authorized by many of the Local Education Authorities for use by teachers in their schools. #

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# See appendix for what children in the Primary Division, for example, will be taught in the fifth year of that Division. (Scotch children attend an Infant Section from five to seven years of age and the Primary Division from age seven to age twelve. Thus the fifth year of the Primary Division corresponds roughly with the Alberta sixth grade.)

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In some school areas co-operation between the churches, teachers, and local school authorities has



extended to the appointment of a minister to each school as a Chaplain. The Chaplain consults with the Head Teacher of the school as to the help he may render the teachers.

In conclusion, we see that although the schools in Scotland are now under a common administrative authority freedom of religion for Christian groups is preserved. Any religious group, Protestant or Catholic, mustering sufficient pupils, may ask for a school where its own particular denominational instruction is to be given. Smaller and scattered (Protestant) sects have been given satisfaction from the dominant Presbyterian group through the formation of agreed syllabuses. The State actively supports the giving of religious instruction in all schools. Scotland seems to have solved, for itself at least, problems of general policy and administration that still trouble England and that are very live issues in the United States of America at present.

It is to these controversial problems of Church and State, tax support of denominational schools, and religious education in the public schools that we turn now in a brief historical survey of the United States.

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## CHAPTER IV

### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES:

#### ITS DEVELOPMENT AND PRESENT PRACTICES

The history of religious education in the schools of the United States is closely bound up with the principle of separation of church and state. A survey of the development of that principle in America will help in following the trend of religious education in that country. Johnson and Yost, in their book, The Separation of Church and State, # say: "By many, it

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# A. W. Johnson, F. H. Yost, The Separation of Church and State, p. 1.

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[the separation of church and state] is considered to be the greatest contribution to civilization the people of the United States have made." This unique factor in American life evolved slowly, from the ideals of liberty-seeking colonists who had suffered persecution for their beliefs to a nation's expression of faith which has been alive and growing for the past century and a half.

It was Roger Williams who enunciated this principle and strove for its inception in the colony of Rhode Island. In 1636, Williams began his campaign which aimed at a republican form of government and religious liberty through complete separation of church



and state. He attained his aim in 1647, when he was granted a charter in England which recognized the separation of church and state.

In other colonies, there was a myriad of religious conflicts. In the middle colonies, such as New Jersey and Delaware, religious tolerance existed. In Maryland, settled by Catholics in 1634, there had been passed the Toleration Act (1649), which provided that "no person ... professing to believe in Jesus Christ shall be in any way troubled ... for his religion ... so that he be not unfaithful to the Lord proprietary or conspire against the government established." #

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# Ibid., p. 3.

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This first act of toleration in America fell short of granting full religious freedom by excluding non-Christians. Pennsylvania offered religious liberty to all who could acknowledge God, but enforced certain religious restrictions on people who sought office in the government. On the other hand, many colonies tried to perpetuate and retain one religion to the exclusion of all others. Thus, in the Carolinas and Georgia, where the Anglican churchmen were outnumbered by dissenters, the monopoly of the church was enforced in practice. The Protestant sects were generally against the Catholics and the Jews. In Virginia, the



problem of religious tolerance became acute in 1776, when Jefferson and Madison secured the passage of a bill which legalized all forms of worship and exempted dissenters from parish rates. This bill was debated back and forth till 1785, when Madison brought about the passing of 'The Virginia Act for Establishing Religious Freedom', which disestablished the Episcopal Church, abolished all parish rates, and forbade the use of all religious tests for office. Other states were not slow in following this action and cleavages between church and state began to appear.

There were many reasons for this new attitude of tolerance. The attempt of the Church of England to establish an episcopacy and tax the colonies (at a time when feeling regarding taxation was already high), was a rallying point for the New England Protestants. The growth of wealth had emphasized the present and its enjoyment, and diminished in men's eyes the importance of credal differences. The growing trade of the states had led to an exchange of ideas. Then, in the colonies were men like Washington, Jefferson, Franklin and Madison, who regarded religion as a force which should be outside the state. All these were forces which were working for the separation of the church and state.

The War of Independence created a favorable



situation in which to legalize the principle of liberty. The Declaration of Independence, while announcing an all-important principle, did not in itself have any force as a legal enactment in protecting the rights of the individual. It was the Ordinance of 1787 which was the first important enactment regarding religious freedom. It referred to the 'North West Territories' of the United States and stated that no person who behaved in an orderly and peaceable manner should be molested on account of his mode of worship or religious sentiments while residing in those territories. The Federal Convention of 1787, drafting the Constitution, took a further step when in Article VI of the Constitution of the United States it provided that no religious test should ever be required as a qualification to any office of public trust under the new Union. However, there was still the feeling among the proponents of religious freedom that these measures were not satisfactory. They demanded a positive statement upon the religious liberties which the constitution guaranteed, thus assuring the separation of church and state. In 1791, Congress passed the First Amendment, which prohibited an established church and guaranteed freedom of worship. The states were still left free to determine their policies in matters of



religion. A few even maintained state churches. Not till the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868 was the final step taken to assure religious freedom to all within the jurisdiction of the states as well as <sup>of</sup> the national government. The amendment declared that "no state shall make or enforce any laws which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of laws." #

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# Fourteenth Amendment, as quoted by V. T. Thayer in Religion in Public Education, p. 25.

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Absolute separation of church and state was now guaranteed by the constitution.

What were the relations between religion and the schools during the period in which the principle of separation evolved? Let us examine this relation of the church and education from the inception of schools in the colonies, through their developmental period, and down to the present time.

The American schools had their beginning in three main religious traditions: Catholic, Anglican and Puritan, all of which were later to be affected by the growing secular movement just outlined. A separate examination of each of these systems will be necessary



before the school system as a whole can be considered.

The Catholic tradition in the United States had its roots in the Spanish colonies. In the first half of the seventeenth century, Franciscan missionaries established a network of schools in New Mexico, Florida and California. This system, however, did not survive in an uninterrupted continuity. The California branch lasted until 1834, when it was secularized by the Mexican Government. In the English colonies, where the Catholic Church was not an established institution as it was in the Spanish and French sectors, the early development of the Catholic schools was short lived. In Maryland, where Catholics established schools in 1634, the Puritans took power in 1649. The Roman Catholic church was proscribed and its development of schools in that state was suspended. The French Catholic schools fared differently, enjoying an uninterrupted growth. The schools established in New Orleans by the Capuchins and the Ursuline Sisters in the 1720's later formed the nucleus of the present Catholic system. Following American independence, all restrictions on Roman Catholics were rescinded and Catholics began to build schools in all places where they were congregated. This system grew until it attracted attention in the first quarter of the



nineteenth century, when the question of state grants to Catholic schools had to be decided. These schools demanded the same measure of public support as the Protestant denominational schools received, agreeing to accept all regulations and State inspection. However, their petition was refused, and Catholics were compelled to build up a separate independent system, which existed side by side with the public system. Since then, the Catholics of America, as in other English-speaking countries, have been segregated in their own institutions. After about 1850, the trend was for Roman Catholics to provide parochial schools for their children. Only in exceptional cases, with the permission of the bishop, were the parents allowed to send their children to public schools. In 1892, there was an attempt by Roman Catholic dignitaries to reach an agreement whereby Catholic parents would be allowed to send their children to public schools in the absence of parochial schools, but the attempt at compromise failed. "All Catholic schools had to form a separate and independent system, as public unsectarian schools were incompatible with the ideas of Catholic education." #

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# The Year Book of Education (1938), University of London Institute of Education, p. 763.

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In the southern colonies there developed the Anglican tradition in United States education. Its stronghold was Virginia, where two different systems of schools were founded under the auspices of the established church: one, on the English grammar-school model, for the upper class children; another, a type of charity school, for poor whites. There was no great concern over the education of the poor. They were neglected and there was general opposition to the establishment of schools for them. However, the revolution entirely changed the position and the influence of the church. The Church of England had to be reorganized separately from its English head, and the State took over the schools.

In the states on the north-east seaboard, a different set of circumstances and conditions led to the development of the Puritan tradition. The Puritans considered education the responsibility and function, not of the state, but of the family and church. The chief motive in establishing schools was religious, and the school teachers obtained licenses to teach from the Bishop. # Among the Puritans, the most

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# Johnson and Yost in The Separation of Church and State, p. 21, state: "In the selection of teachers, as much attention was given to their piety and religious standing as to their scholarship."

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influential group was the Congregation Church of New England, and its school system served as a model for other communities. The church made definite proposals for education. It influenced the passing in Massachusetts in 1647 of the famous law requiring the establishment of an elementary school in every town containing fifty families, and a grammar school wherever there were one hundred families. Johnson and Yost comment: # "This law which really established a school

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# The Separation of Church and State, p. 20.

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system is noteworthy in that it is distinctly civil in character." It was an early step towards the secularization of the church controlled schools. #

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# A. V. Thayer, in Religion in Public Education, pp. 30-33, discusses the development of the public school and mentions the following as some of the forces which contributed to the secularization of the church-sponsored schools: (1) The enrichment of the curriculum beyond its religious aspects to meet the needs of the colonists. (2) The establishment of the 'academies' emphasized the need of giving a general education and training to America's rising generation. (3) The realization that education was necessary for all men if the new republic was to prosper and develop. "These broader concerns of the school both encouraged and pointed to the need for public support of education."

The Year Book of Education, 1938, pp. 884-892, adds other factors, such as the influence of the French Encyclopedists, and of such men and institutions as Jefferson and Franklin and the Philosophical Society, who were concerned with this problem.

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We have seen that the schools of the United States had their origins in religious organizations and that in the case of the Anglican and Puritan traditions there was a gradual increase in state control of the schools. It was the American Revolution which further accentuated the trend toward public support and control of education. The separation of church and state, was carried over into the field of education. Religion in the schools lost its exclusive sectarian character and, although it still formed an integral part of the curriculum, its position there was to be challenged. It was only natural that public support of education should lead to the suggestion that in a country where the church and state are separate, the latter should not further the interests of one sect over the interests of another. Gradually, the religious nature of the schools declined. States developed systems of education financed by public funds and under public control which could direct what was to be taught in the schools. Private schools were subsidized under the agreement that the state would determine the nature of the curriculum. In many states, attempts to establish sectarian education were prohibited. The sectarian element in American education was being checked and was losing the position it had maintained for so long.



The hundred years following the American Revolution saw a great change in the American school system. The academies begun by Franklin, the influence of the French Encyclopedists, the work of Horace Mann, the influx of the many different races, and the growth and prosperity of the new republic itself, were all influences which were making the public school secular. By the time of the civil war, the public school system was established in all the states.

The spread of the principle of non-sectarianism in what had once been sectarian schools paralleled that of public support and control. "By the time public schools, publicly supported, developed in great numbers, the principle of non-sectarian religious teaching in Protestant parochial schools was quite firmly established." # Prior to the Civil War, various

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# V. T. Thayer, Religion in Public Education, p. 35.

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sectarian schools, particularly Catholic, were still being supported by public funds. However, this practice was becoming more generally opposed. When in the 1870's the Catholics attempted to obtain the same support as the public schools enjoyed, they encountered the opposition of President Grant, who was championing the separation of church and state. In 1875, Grant proposed an amendment to the constitution which would forbid the



teaching of religious tenets in the schools and the granting of any school funds or taxes for the benefit, directly or indirectly, of any religious sect or denomination. The amendment was defeated in the Senate. This is sometimes regarded as the peak in the movement for secularization of the public schools. Following this, it became more common to exclude religion from the schools. Religious exercises were still carried on, and the obligatory Bible readings disappeared very slowly. By 1903, ten states required reading of the Bible. By 1913, this number was reduced to three. Thus, early in the twentieth century, nearly all vestiges of religious education had disappeared from the public schools of America.

During the twentieth century there have been four distinct reactions to the separation of church and state in the United States. Two of these have been characterized by attempts of the church to provide religious instruction for children outside of the public school, while the remaining two have been distinguished by direct involvement of the schools through the use of released and dismissed time and the inclusion of religion in the curriculum.

The growth of the principle of separation of church and state left sectarian religious groups with two alternatives. They could entrust the education of their children to state-supported, 'secular', public



schools, or they would have to provide parochial schools which could teach sectarian religion but would receive no state support. The Protestants were largely in accord with the idea of public schools, and at the present time there are relatively few Protestant parochial schools in the United States. In 1933, the Anglican Church controlled about 190 parish schools, with about 12,000 pupils. In the same year, other Protestant denominations were supporting 1,262 elementary and 198 secondary schools, with 74,114 and 18,057 pupils enrolled, respectively. The bulk of these schools were controlled by the Lutherans. #

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# Year Book of Education, 1938, p. 849.

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in Lutheran schools had reached 133,366, an increase of nearly forty per cent over that of 1937. #

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# "Protestant Parochials", Time, Vol. LIII, (February 21, 1949), p. 45.

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it appears that this progress is to be short lived. At a meeting of the International Council of Religious Education in Columbus, Ohio, in February, 1939, American and Canadian Protestant denominations decided to reject parochial schools. Time says:

"The council recommended: (1) that Protestant parochial schools be discouraged as 'a serious threat to public education and democracy'; (2) that the cultural and non-sectarian aspects



of religion be taught through such subjects as history and literature in the public school curriculum; (3) that week-day religious education on a 'released time' basis be continued." #

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# Loc. cit.

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People of Catholic faith reacted more strongly against the secularization of the public schools. They felt that their children ought to get religious instruction in the schools. To assure this, they turned to parochial schools. Since 1900, there has been an extremely rapid development of the Catholic parochial school system in the United States. American Catholics spend \$182,250,000 a year to run their church schools. This is more than any Protestant denomination spends for all purposes. The total expenditure of the Methodist Church was only \$165,000,000; the second highest in Protestantism, \$132,000,000, was raised by the Southern Baptist. # In 1933, the Catholic parochial

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# "Fundamentals of the Faith", Time, Vol. LIII, No. 14, (October 4, 1948), p. 38

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system included 7,942 elementary schools, with 2,193,160 pupils, and 2,074 secondary schools with 269,309 pupils. Instruction was provided by 6,807 lay teachers and 67,486 teachers who belonged to religious orders. # In

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# Year Book of Education, 1938, p. 763.

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1947, it was estimated that of the 27,000,000 school children in the U. S. A., 3,000,000 attended parochial schools, mostly Catholic. # In 1948, over nine per

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# "Church and School Funds", Newsweek, Vol. 29, (April 28, 1947), p. 92

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cent of the total American scholastic enrolment was in Catholic schools, the figure for elementary schools was nearly eleven per cent. The enrolment in the Catholic secondary schools now totalled nearly 490,000. #

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# "Fundamentals of the Faith", Time, Vol. LII, No. 14, (October 4, 1948), p. 38

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This rapid growth of the parochial system has been paralleled by increased demand for state support for parish schools. The parochial system's adherents argue that they not only support their own schools but are also taxed to support public education. Since their schools save other taxpayers a vast amount of money, they feel that the state should give some support to their schools. # Though the argument of the parochial

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# On this matter, Time, (October 4, 1948), p. 38, comments: "... these schools save taxpayers some \$400,000,000 a year in additional taxes. They save the tax-payers much more than their actual \$182,250,000 cost per year, because their operating expenses are less than half the public school average."

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school supporters is sound financially, other people feel that state support of these schools would constitute a violation of the principle of separation of church and state. Up to the present time, no parochial school has obtained outright state support. However, in Supreme Court, rulings have upheld the legality of parochial schools receiving public aid in such fields as transportation, textbooks and health services, in certain states.

The early part of the twentieth century also saw the attempt of churches to assume the responsibility for providing religious education for children. This was the era of the great Sunday School movement.

G. H. Betts has this to say of the period: # "From

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# "Rethink Religious Education", Christian Century,  
Vol. LI, (March 14, 1934), p. 360.

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about the year 1905 and continuing well past the year 1920, the star of religious education [Sunday School] was in the ascendant. ... education was to be made the effective instrument of religion. The church was to center its efforts on the young, creating for their enlightenment a true teaching church." Teachers' institutes, college departments and directorates of church education were all established by the church in conjunction with this movement. However, late in the 1920's, this movement waned and the gains of the



past two decades began to fade. "The retardation in Sunday School enrolment in the United States as far as Protestantism is concerned came to over thirty per cent between 1916 and 1926. The actual decrease during the next decade amounted to much more." #

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# C. H. Moehlman, The Church as Educator, p. 59.

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Though the principle of the separation of church and school had been established in the public schools of America in the nineteenth century, this did not mean that it was strictly observed. There were constant attempts to re-introduce sectarian religious education into the schools, and in the twentieth century there have been progressively stronger attempts to make the schools re-assume the task of sectarian religious instruction. The most successful of these attempts have been the allied movements known as the 'released' and 'dismissed' time plans. Essentially, the 'dismissed time' plan provides for the dismissal of children from school one or more times a week at the request of the parents, for the purpose of receiving religious instruction. The public school by this plan assumes no responsibility after the pupils leave its grounds. This plan was introduced in 1913 by Wm. A. Wirt, at Gary, Indiana, and is referred to occasionally as the 'Gary Plan'. As a rule, under this plan, there is no



check on the children. The pupils are simply dismissed early one day a week, "with no school check-up on whether they improve the shining hour in the local church, movie house or pool room". # The public school

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# "On School Time or Off", Time, Vol. LI, (March 21, 1948), p. 81.

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is not concerned about what is taught in the religious classes. On the other hand, in the practice of 'released time' the public school has a more direct relation to the religious instruction. In this other attempt to re-introduce religious education into the public schools, religious instructors are permitted to enter the schools to give classes in religion on time released from the curriculum. With many modifications, these two plans, 'released' and 'dismissed' time, are the most common programs of religious instruction in the public schools of America. The growth of both plans has been rapid. From the beginnings at Gary in 1913, the practice spread till by 1925 it was in operation in twenty-four states and affected 40,000 children. In 1935, 250,000 public school children in thirty states were receiving religious instruction, and by 1943 the number had risen to 750,000. By 1947, 2,000,000 public school children in 2,200 communities were enrolled in week-day religious



classes.## But the advocates of separation of church

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# Religious Education, (Jan.-Feb., 1946), p. 7.

Christian Century, Vol. 64, (Feb. 26, 1947), p. 275.

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and state have not been asleep, and the expansion of the program of weekday religious instruction has not been unimpeded. There have been many suits in courts of law brought about by citizens who felt that sectarian groups were infringing upon the United States'

Constitution in implementing programs of released time. One of the most recent and most important of such cases was the McCollum case.## In this case the teachers of

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# Cf. A. W. Johnson and F. W. Yost, Separation of Church and State, pp. 88-90.

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religion came into the public school buildings and held their classes. The Supreme Court of the United States decided this practice was illegal. An analysis of the decision would indicate that for the purposes of religious instruction the school boards cannot provide accommodation, facilities or services, keep attendance records or enforce attendance, or release or dismiss pupils if attendance is to be enforced or attendance records kept.## Thus, at a blow, all forms

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# W. C. Seyfort, "Religious Education in the Schools", School Review, Vol. 56, (May 1948), p. 249.

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of released time programs in the United States have been ruled unconstitutional.

However, the dismissed time program still remains. It has received favorable attention, and now, by express statutory provisions, court decisions, ruling of state attorney-generals, and opinions of state boards of education or chief state officers, approximately forty states authorize the dismissal of public school pupils for religious education classes.# In its 'pure' form, it is not likely that

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# A. W. Johnson and F. H. Yost, Separation of Church and State, p. 75.

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the 'dismissed time' plan will be challenged.

Another development in the field of religious education has been the attempt to organize religious instruction as part of the curriculum. Although the instruction is not given during school hours or in school buildings, an allowance of high school credits is given for attendance at these classes. The classes are provided for children of various sects under the auspices of the religious denominations concerned. This plan, though widely prevalent, has been opposed and has met with limited success.

Thus, we have seen that in the United States in the nineteenth century, secular education was gradually



supplanting sectarian religious education in the schools, till by the end of the century American public schools were almost entirely secular in character. The past thirty or forty years have seen the rise of forces which would re-introduce religious education into the schools. At the present time, these forces are still very active.

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CHAPTER V

THE HISTORY OF RELIGION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
OF CANADA

When the settlers from the Old World began to form communities in the New, they set up schools in which to teach their children. In the Maritimes, and in Upper and Lower Canada, most of the schools were of a religious nature, not only supported and controlled by the various denominations, but also primarily religious in the emphasis they held. Study of the Scriptures and religious instruction formed a large part of the curricula.

A brief history of the early schools of Ontario, such as is given in a pamphlet of the Interchurch Committee on Protestant-Roman Catholic relations, #

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# Interchurch Committee on Protestant-Roman Catholic Relations. The Separate School in Ontario, p. 3.

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will serve to illustrate what took place in the eastern provinces with regard to the secularization of the schools. # At the conquest in 1763 the only white

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# For a detailed but interesting history of this same period in all the eastern provinces, see The Yearbook of Education, 1938. pp. 763-68, 804-09, 849-852, 892, 94.

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settlement in Upper Canada consisted of a few hundred



French Canadian farmers who had spread upward across the border from Detroit. While these people received religious teaching from the French missionaries, there were no schools in the usual sense of the word. The first schools of Upper Canada sprang up with the coming of the United Empire Loyalists, after 1783. Usually an earnest clergyman or a needy but educated gentlewoman, anxious to increase a meagre income as well as to improve the well-being of the community, gathered the children into some suitable building. The small fees of the pupils made up the teacher's pay. Early in the nineteenth century, in villages and towns, the private schools were partly replaced by schools conducted by churches and civic communities. These were managed by trustees, but the pupils' fees were still the chief source of revenue. Soon, however, the provincial government recognized that such important institutions, especially since they were becoming widespread, could no longer be financed locally; nor should they continue uncontrolled. In 1816, 1820, and 1824 grants were distributed to the best qualified of these schools, but the provincial governments at first felt it too big a burden to take firm control. There were no inspectors appointed to visit the schools, regulations were few and unenforced, and each school was largely under the control of its local board as to the subjects



taught, textbooks used, and qualifications of teachers. The one book taught and stressed in all the early schools was the Bible. Indeed in many of the early schools the Bible, or more usually the New Testament, was the only book on the premises.

However, as the communities grew and became more populous, the churches became overwhelmed with the task of educating the common man. K. MacLean Glazier#

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# K. M. Glazier, "Teaching Religion in the Public Schools of Canada", Religious Education, XXXVII, (November - December, 1942), pp. 349-355.

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gives a clear picture of this part of the school's development, covering the question rather completely. As the church could not levy taxes, it could not carry such a heavy burden as that into which the support of the public schools had grown; the task was obviously one for the state. At the same time, various denominations which had grown up in the community were unwilling to let any one denomination gain control of the school which their children attended. The state took over the burden of the support, as well as the control of the school program, and the churches lost the influence they once held. Because those same churches could not agree on what sort of religious teaching they would accept in the public schools, religious teaching for the largest part disappeared



from the curriculum of the public schools, driven out not by secular demands but by the interdenominational bickerings of the churches themselves.

There are factors in the Canadian scene which have made this country's approach to the problem of religious education slightly different to that of the United States and Great Britain. These factors are dealt with very well by Glazier# and the authors

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# Ibid., p. 349.

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are indebted to him for many of the ideas in the following summary of the Canadian scene. The first of the factors to be considered here is the size and distribution of the population. Because of the scattered nature of the people and the relative lack of large cities, it has been necessary to develop a program of religious instruction which could be carried on in small schools with a minimum amount of equipment. It has often been the small towns rather than the cities which have led the way in setting up systems of religious education.

A second factor# which has played a large part

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# Ibid., p. 350.

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in the development of religious education in the schools is the unique separate school system, provided



for in four of the nine provinces. If, after a public school has been established in a community, a minority group - either Roman Catholic or Protestant - wishes to establish a school of its own, it is permitted to do so. This 'separate school' has the same course of study as the public school, is under government supervision, and is supported by public funds. (It is in this last point that such schools differ from the parochial schools of the United States, which are not state-supported.) It is taught by teachers of its own faith, attended by children of its own faith, and is under denominational control. This type of school is permitted in Quebec and Ontario by the British North America Act of 1867. When Saskatchewan and Alberta entered the Confederation in 1905, the privilege of having separate schools was made permanent for them also. The other five provinces have no legal provision for such schools, but in practice do have them, especially in the larger cities where certain schools are attended by children and taught by teachers of a particular faith. Separate schools are permitted only to the Roman Catholic and Protestant faiths, and in this way should be considered privileges, and not an inalienable right.

Looking at the Dominion from east to west, the



situation regarding religious education appears as follows: #

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# The Dominion situation is very clearly and concisely stated in the following report, to which the authors are indebted:  
The Religious Council of Canada, Committee on Weekday Religious Education, "Religious Education in Canada and Newfoundland", an unpublished report.

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The Maritimes are the most **reluctant** # about the

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# Glazier, Op. Cit. p. 351.

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introduction of religion into their schools. Their laws permit religious exercises, and also permit or rather provide for the teaching of the principles of Christian morality. No statistics are available on the number of schools taking advantage of the permission for religious exercises. The law providing for the teaching of the principles of Christian morality might be broadly interpreted to mean permission to give religious instruction, but practically none is given. In Prince Edward Island, not only has the question of increasing the emphasis on religious education not been raised, but it has generally been avoided. New Brunswick has a provision in its laws for the giving of religious instruction in the schools out of school hours, and for the opening or closing exercise for the day



consisting of reading a passage of Scripture from either the King James' or the Douay Version. Up to the present time there has been no provision for formal religious education in the New Brunswick schools. However, the Minister of Education has expressed his willingness to include it in the program if the various denominations can agree upon its content. Committees of some of the various faiths are now dealing with the problem. #

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# Religious Education Council of Canada, Committee on Weekday Religious Education. Op. Cit.

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In Nova Scotia, eight or nine years ago, the major Protestant faiths formed an interdenominational committee to study the question of religious education in the schools and to make recommendations to the Department of Education. This committee drew up Scripture lessons for four age groups, comparable to Grades I - III, IV - VI, VII - IX, X - XII. These were published and recommended for the use of the schools. Later the same committee issued a set of Devotional Exercises for the schools, which was approved. The next aim of the committee is to discover some plan of religious instruction for the regular school day, to be included in the curriculum as a subject as reading is included, and generally



acceptable to the various denominations. #

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# Ibid.

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Quebec has the most comprehensive system of religious instruction in the Dominion. Religion is an integral part of the curriculum of the public schools, not only permitted but required in both Catholic and Protestant schools. The Department of Education in Quebec is divided into two closely cooperating halves, one controlling the Protestant schools and the other the Catholic. In this manner, each faith has its share in the control of the schools in which it is interested, but control is not so divided as to be chaotic. Let us look at the Catholic system first. The regulations of the Catholic Committee of the Council of Public Instruction require that the organization of the schools be of such a nature that religious instruction shall hold first place in the curriculum and be taught daily. Also, religion should permeate the atmosphere of the school and be not only taught as a separate subject but be linked up with all the other subjects of the course. Teachers are instructed to follow the course of studies not as an end to be attained in itself, or as a mass of knowledge to be absorbed, but as a rational means to rightly direct the moral and intel-



lectual life of the child to help him become a better Christian and a better citizen. The whole course is aimed at making the pupil better able to meet life - physically, intellectually and morally. #

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# Ibid.

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In the Protestant schools of the province, religious instruction is also required. In the elementary grades it is given for twenty minutes daily. The course is arranged on the basis of topics with appropriate readings from the Bible. Topics such as helpfulness, thankfulness and service are studied, with the Bible for background reading. In the high school grades, the Bible is an integral part of the course in English, with a thorough study of the life of Jesus, Peter, Paul, and the development of religious and ethical ideas. All the work in this subject is taken during school hours as a part of the regular curriculum and, in almost all the schools, instruction is given by the class teacher. #

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# Ibid.

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In Ontario, Bible readings and prayer have always been conducted by teachers, and in many classrooms a considerable amount of incidental religious teaching has been given. In addition, during the last few



years an increasing number of clergymen have been giving religious instruction in the schools before or after school hours in accordance with the regulations. However, in 1944, the Ontario public schools began teaching a new course in religious education as a regular part of the elementary school program, using two half-hour periods per week. The instruction and exercises, made up of prayers, Bible readings for memorization, choral reading and speaking, and instructional help, are such as to be acceptable to the great majority of Protestant churches and every effort has been made to avoid content which might be found objectionable to members of these churches. Reports to date indicate that the course has been generally satisfactory and worthwhile, although a great deal of criticism has been heard in strong opposition to it. # No official program has so far

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# Cf. "Religion in Schools", Canadian Forum, Vol. XXIV, (May 1944), p. 28.

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been inaugurated for the use of the high schools of the province. #

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# Religious Education Council of Canada, Committee on Weekday Religious Education, Op. Cit.

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In the Province of Manitoba, the Education Department Act vests the Advisory Board with the



authority to prescribe the form of religious exercises to be used in the schools of the province.

These exercises are given at the option of the school trustees, and are held just before the closing hour in the afternoon or just after school opens in the morning. There is also provision for religious instruction in the province, which must be given between three-thirty and four o'clock in the afternoon, by any Christian clergyman whose charge includes a portion of the district. The content of the course taught is made the responsibility of the clergyman.## In the small town of Selkirk, just

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## Ibid.

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outside of Winnipeg, an experiment is being carried on in which all the Protestant ministers - Anglican, United, Presbyterian, Icelandic Lutheran, and Salvation Army - cooperate to give religious instruction in each grade of the public and high schools once a week. This project may point the way for other Manitoba communities.##

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## K. M. Glazier, "Teaching Religion in the Public Schools of Canada", Religious Education, Vol. XXXVII, (November - December, 1942), pp. 349-355.

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In Saskatchewan, the laws are similar to those in Manitoba, with Bible readings and the repetition



of the Lord's Prayer permitted once during the school day, and religious instruction allowed during the last half hour of the school day, such instruction being under the jurisdiction of the local board of trustees. However, little advantage of these provisions is taken and religious exercises and instruction are far from common in the province. One community, Lloydminster, has implemented a project much like that of Selkirk, Manitoba, but it has been in operation now for nearly fourteen years. Two half-hour periods of instruction per week are given by the various clergymen. #

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# Ibid.

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Alberta school law as has been seen, provides that each school shall be opened with the reading of a passage of Scripture and the recitation of the Lord's Prayer unless the school board, by resolution, instructs the teacher not to do so. It also provides that the last half-hour of the school day may be used for the giving of such religious instruction as may be desired by the board. # The advantage that has been

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# Cf. Ante, p. 11.

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taken of these provisions for religious education in



Alberta will be dealt with more fully in a later chapter.

In British Columbia there is no program of religious instruction in the schools, but since the beginning of the 1944 school year there has been daily reading of the Bible and the recitation of the Lord's Prayer. There are also four special optional courses in Bible study for high school pupils which may be taken extramurally for credit towards high school graduation and university entrance. #

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# Ibid.

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To sum up the various laws of the provinces, Quebec is the only province requiring religious instruction in all public schools, both Catholic and Protestant; Ontario permits clergymen to give religious instruction in the school building before or after school hours; Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta permit such teaching the last half hour of the school day; British Columbia has recently made provision for elective extramural high school courses; and Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick require instruction in Christian morality. In each province the legislation contains a 'conscience clause'. This permits any child to be excused from religious teaching at the request of his



parents or guardian. Besides these provisions for religious instruction, all of the provinces either permit or require some kind of religious exercises, either Bible reading or the recitation of the Lord's Prayer, or both. This, at the present time, is the situation in Canada with regard to religious education in the public schools.

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## CHAPTER VI

### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN ALBERTA TODAY

In this chapter, it is our intention to set forth as fully and clearly as possible the situation regarding religious education in the province of Alberta at the present time: to show the legal basis of the problem, to ascertain what has been done so far in various districts, to examine the pressure groups that are working for and against religious instruction, to outline the arguments put forward by these groups, and to present the attitude of the general public as far as we have been able to determine it.

In brief review of the preceding chapter, the following is the situation in Alberta from the standpoint of the laws of the province:

- (1) The province was given the right to maintain separate schools by the Dominion Government in 1905.
- (2) In 1942, the opening of the school day by the reading of a passage of Scripture and the recitation of the Lord's Prayer was made obligatory, provided that the Board may dispense with either or both by resolution.
- (3) Also in 1942, the last half-hour of the school day was set aside for the giving of such religious instruction as might be desired or



approved by the board. In 1947, this section was amended to the effect that in a high school which employed more than one teacher and which provided departmentalized instruction, religious instruction might be given in any half-hour of the school day, subject to the approval of the board and the Inspector.

- (4) Finally, any child whose parents do not desire him to have religious instruction may be excused for the time of such instruction.

Investigating what advantage had been taken of the legal provisions for religious instruction throughout the province, we found the following situation:

Vermilion has what is probably the oldest established program, in which Roman Catholics, Missionary Alliance, Salvation Army, United Church and Church of England co-operate to give one half-hour per week of religious instruction to Grades III to VI inclusive, in the Vermilion School. Each of the instructors plans his program separately. In the towns of Red Deer, Banff, Grande Prairie and Altario, some form of religious instruction is being given, beyond Bible readings and the recitation of the Lord's Prayer. In Barrhead and in more than thirty of the surrounding local schools, the Bible Instruction Society has the approval of the local boards to give non-denominational



instruction in religion. In St. Paul, Beiseker, Standard, Blackie, Schuler, DeBolt and Lac Ste. Anne, religious instruction is given in the schools. In Calgary, the School Board agreed in February 1948 that beginning in September of the same year one half-hour per week should be used in all classes of Grades I to VI for instruction in the Bible. In a letter to the authors, the Rev. Dr. Scott makes the following observation: "What has been done in Alberta as far as Protestant instruction is concerned has been experimental, both in cities and the rural areas. Some areas have been carrying on for quite a number of years without a break, and other have not continued beyond a brief period. From our little experiments here and there we are trying to learn." # This is a brief

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# Rev. Dr. Stanley Scott, Blackie, Alberta, Chairman of Provincial Interchurch Committee, in a letter to the authors now on file.

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indication of the advantage that various groups have taken of the legislation of the Province providing for religious education in the schools.

What are the pressure groups in the Province that are working to establish religious instruction in the curriculum of the schools? As was mentioned in the introductory chapter, the Alberta School Trustees' Association passed a resolution at its 1948 convention



requesting the Department of Education to train teachers to give religious instruction, and a second resolution requesting the Curriculum Committee of the Department to arrange a syllabus for simple Bible teaching in the schools. # The first of these resolutions was

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# Cf. Ante, p. 1.

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proposed by the Executive and the second by the Red Deer local; both were passed by the delegates. However, the divisional trustees are far from unanimous agreement on the matter. In answer to a form-letter question: 'Do you favor some form of religious education in the schools?', the following replies were among those received from divisional boards:

'... not in favor of any change in present regulations.'

'... leads to confusion and, often, bitterness.'

'... as a definite subject on the timetable is unworkable and impractical.'

'Any kind of uniform religious education is impossible in the ---- Division.'

'... prefer present arrangements with respect to religious education.'

'... should be taught in the church and the home.'

'... should be in the church or home.'

'... the school is not the place to teach religion.'

'The Board does not favor religious education in the schools.'



'... best taught by the churches.'

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The letters from which the above quotations have been taken are on file.

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Unanimous or not, however, the Association in question by its action must be considered as a point of pressure for the institution of religious education in the public schools of the province.

The churches have also provided some agitation for the inclusion of religion in the school system; theirs has been no organized pressure, but, rather, occasional and individual movements to arouse interest in small areas. Most of the churches have been either content to make use of the present regulations to give instruction in the local schools, or to do nothing, usually after some unsuccessful attempt to reach a local inter-church agreement or after encountering too great disapproval from different sources in a district. However, in 1940, there was set up what is known as a Provincial Inter-church Committee with the Rev. Dr. Stanley Scott as the chairman. Representative of the Anglican, Baptist, United and Presbyterian Churches, the committee surveyed the situation in relation to the activities of the various denominations, but little has emerged from this investigation in the way of suggestions or requests which would alter the situation, other than the approval of a text to be used in giving



instruction to classes in religion. On the whole, the churches seem to be more interested in using the present privileges of the Province to the greatest advantage than in agitating in a body for new concessions. The Rev. Dr. Scott, in a letter to the authors, estimates that there are over 16,000 children in Alberta who are receiving one half-hour of religious instruction per week at the present time. The total school enrolment at present is approximately 175,000.

In 1942, the Alberta Federation of Home and School Associations was described as "working to get required religious instruction in the schools and courses in the teaching of religion in the normal schools." # In a

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# K. MacLean Glazier, "Teaching Religion in the Public Schools of Canada; Some Recent Developments." Religious Education, XXXVII, (Nov.-Dec. 1942), pp. 349 ff.

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letter from the headquarters of the Federation to the authors, no indication of any concerted drive was given, but the opinion of the Federation was that the teaching of religion is of utmost importance and that it should be begun in the home and carried on in the community school and church. There does not seem to be any large-scale activity on the part of this Federation concerning the problem, but it can perhaps be classed as a source of some pressure.



The work done by individuals in furthering programs of religious instruction, as shown earlier in this chapter, is also a source of pressure, more local in its influence than provincial. These scattered points of interest, however, do add to the whole provincial picture and when taken in total are not insignificant.

Opposed to the foregoing organizations and individuals, and creating a drive against the institution of religious instruction in the schools as part of the regular curriculum, are other organizations and individuals. The Alberta Teachers' Association is one of these, as evidenced by the resolution passed by the delegates of the Annual General Meeting in 1948. # Again, as in the case of

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# Cf. Ante, p. 2.

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the Trustees, there was no unanimity of opinion in answer to a questionnaire sent to the local branches of the Association by the authors. This seems to be the situation in all cases, e.g., no group can wholeheartedly agree one way or another on the problem. Individuals approached by means of questionnaires, interviews and letters also gave a wide variety of answers ranging from definite 'noes' to 'undecided' to definite 'yea's'. Although the majority in various



organizations may decide the question pro or con, to say that any group is in wholehearted agreement one way or another would not be true.

With the sources of the existent pressure in the province clearly in mind, some of the aims and objectives which the advocates of religious education hope to gain may prove interesting. In the answers of persons who are active in giving religious education in the schools today the following definitions of aims are given:

'We hope that ... the child may have a Faith which he can practice, not only as a child, but also as an adult citizen - ... love of God and neighbor, honesty, purity, temperance, respect for authority, and appreciation of the wonders of God-created nature ... . On the realization of this hope amongst school children in general one would expect to see: a reduction in crime rate, divorce and juvenile delinquency; more good-will and co-operation amongst men and nations.'

'... give an understanding of Christianity, its teaching and history.'

'... give the individual something to "tie to" in time of difficulty.'

'... religious instruction in the schools is most important, especially in these times when atheism and communism are so active.'

'... education in the teachings of the Bible.'

'... bring religion into the atmosphere of the school and the world ... .'

'... children must be taught a definite faith.'

'Teachers ... tell us there is a marked difference for good (morally) in those who receive religious instruction ... . Many children have come to a personal trust in Christ as their Saviour ... .'



'...children will understand that the Bible is a record of facts rather than a story book.'

'... result should be a Respect for God's Word.'

Again, in the objectives hoped for by the champions of religious education there is no more unanimity of opinion than there was in the groups whose majority wanted the instruction put in the schools. The above quotations are from letters of individuals who are at present giving religious instruction in schools.

As shown by the following excerpts, there is just as wide a variety of opinion in the minds of the school trustees concerning the benefits accruing from religious education.

'... improve moral and social living; acquaint the children with the Bible and its teachers and principles.'

'... such things as divorce, ... cheating, ... and animosity ..., are bound to decrease.'

'... divorce, juvenile delinquency, lack of church attendance show the need for religious education.'

'... basis later for decisions as to conduct, etc.'

'Christianity is the cure for all social ills ... .'

'... give children a broader view of religion and qualify them to think for themselves.'

'... provide the pupil with an idea of right and wrong as applied to everyday conduct, without which many young lives are going on the rocks.'

'... the practice of Christian Charity towards all men.'

'... children learn Bible stories, characters, history, (and) ... feel free to discuss stories ... without a feeling of shyness.'



'... tend to make young people more religious-conscious.'

The reasons in favor of religious education as given by some teachers who advocate it are given here.

'... students should recognize virtues and vices. Make them honest, charitable ..., morally upright ... .'

'Can we have ethics or morals without a religious concept? There is a common Spiritual heritage to be passed on ... .'

'An understanding of our way of life today demands a knowledge of Christian principles and beliefs.'

'... higher standards of conduct and happier lives ... achieved in the adult world.'

'... our greatest weapon against enemy propaganda in our social setup.'

'... give a basis for our literary culture. ... present an ideal of conduct, or morals ... .'

'... usefulness in bringing a fuller life to the children ... .'

'Some children ... never have the opportunity of getting religious instruction.'

These, then, are the reasons presented by some of the proponents of religious education.

In this chapter, the problem has been presented from the standpoint of the laws concerning it, of the advantage taken at the present time of provision for religious education, of the different groups in the province who are working for religious education today, and, of the aims and objectives which these groups hope to achieve by some religious instruction program. In



the next chapter, some of these aims will be examined in an attempt to determine to what degree they are valid.

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## CHAPTER VII

### IS RELIGIOUS EDUCATION THEORETICALLY SOUND?

An intelligent man bases his actions on some critical consideration of the past and present experiences and actions of mankind, and an assessment of their results. On this basis of information (which may be experiential or philosophical, and which has been examined critically), he is guided ahead.

A study concerning the desirability of religious instruction in the schools of Alberta can only assume validity if the conclusions reached are the result of an examination of the soundness of the philosophical implications, and an estimate of the practical successes of similar experiments in other areas of the world. Such considerations we feel should be made before any attempt is made to introduce any form of religious instruction into the schools. The fact that certain groups and individuals advocate such instruction does not in itself make the instruction desirable. Since, in Alberta, experience concerning religious education is somewhat limited, we must examine the problem on a broader basis and attempt to apply the conclusions at which we arrive to the local situation.



In previous chapters we traced the history of religious education in Great Britain, the United States and Canada, and examined it in the Alberta setting. In each case we saw that there were forces today which are working to introduce, or to increase the amount of, religious education in the schools. We now propose to consider these forces more specifically. We shall examine their nature and look for possible reasons for their growth. Are the claims for religious education, as put forth by its proponents, sound in theory? Are the systems of religious education which are in existence sound and justifiable in practice? These two questions will form the basis of the examination of religious education in the next two chapters. If the philosophy underlying the claims of groups which are advocating religious instruction is sound, then such instruction should be generally introduced into the schools for the benefits which would result. However, if such claims will not bear examination, then the programs for religious instruction advocated have no place in our educational system. Similarly, if the systems of religious education in existence show results which would justify their use, we should consider their introduction into the classrooms. But, if such plans will not stand the test of practical application,



or, if it should become apparent that the good they do does not exceed the dangers inherent in the systems, we shall have to conclude that the forms of religious education considered cannot be admitted to the school.

In this chapter, we shall briefly consider the forces advocating religious education. We shall discuss some of the theories which would explain the present emphasis on religious education. We shall present the aims and objectives of religious education as it is generally advocated at the present time. Finally, we shall attempt to ascertain the validity of these aims and objectives by examining the philosophical bases upon which they rest. In all cases our arguments will concern the types of religious education advocated at present; that is, types which are sectarian in nature. Our conception of public schools will be those schools which are publicly owned and operated.

In our investigation of the history of religious education in Great Britain, the United States and Canada, we saw the sectarian influence disappearing from the public school to a greater or lesser degree, and secularism taking its place. We also saw during the past twenty or thirty years increasingly stronger attempts by various groups and individuals to bring



about a return or religious instruction to the schools. Since movements are generally a reaction to specific situations, we must logically assume that there is some underlying cause for the present pressures. What are these motives which underlie the present day demand for religious education? Let us examine the problem in the light of statements made by distinguished historians, sociologists, philosophers, religious leaders and educators.

These range from simple statements regarding present day conditions to involved studies of the history of man. R. Niebuhr, writing in the

Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, says:

"The development of sectarian education as competitive with public education is due to the same factors which brought forth the latter; the rise of the democratic movement and of nationalism, with the correlate secularization of life, partly as a result of the industrial revolution. While these movements produced systems of public education, they left denominational and other minority interests unsatisfied, and the elimination of all religious instruction from state schools - partly as a result of denominational conflict - outraged the convictions of those groups for whom the religious interest was the primary value of life." #

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# Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Vol. 5, p. 423.

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Sorokin, on the other hand, goes much deeper for an explanation. According to him, we are living at one of the epoch-making turning points of history,



"when one fundamental form of culture and society -  
sensate - is declining and a different form is  
emerging." # This crisis, like the crises which have

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# P. A. Sorokin, The Crisis of Our Age, p. 22.

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preceded it, "is marked by an extraordinary explosion  
of wars, revolutions, anarchy and bloodshed; by social,  
moral, economic, political and intellectual chaos." #

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# Ibid., p. 22.

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Sorokin asserts that such a change seems to be  
necessary to any culture or society which is to remain  
creative throughout its historical existence. The  
world crisis which marks the 'turning point' of a  
culture arouses people to make adjustments. However,  
these are originally petty attempts at minor change  
which may be effected in the economic system, in  
government, and even in the church.

"Other doctors see salvation for the world  
crisis in a mild religious therapy: making  
the church more comfortable, the services  
more attractive, and the sermons more enter-  
taining. Still others believe in the magic  
power of education and expect marvels from  
changing here and there the curricula of the  
schools ... ." #

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# Ibid., p. 309.

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However, such minor adjustments are insufficient



for the situation. Toynbee, although he does not specifically concern himself with our contemporary problem of religious education, does stress the existence of a crisis now. He sees our western civilization as having already passed through one and one-half beats of his 'rout-rally-rout' rhythm.

He concludes:

"... We are already far advanced in our time of troubles, and if we ask what has been our most conspicuous and specific trouble in the recent past, the answer clearly is: nationalistic internecine warfare, reinforced as has been pointed out in an earlier part of this study, by the combined drive of energies generated by the recently released forces of Democracy and Industrialism." #

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# A. J. Toynbee, A Study of History, Abridgement by D. C. Somervell, p. 552-3.

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Thus Toynbee, while differing from Sorokin in thesis, concurs regarding the existence of a world crisis at the present time.

Lucock, writing in 1934, also saw a crisis, #

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# H. E. Lucock, "Religious Education Tomorrow", Christian Century, Vol. 51, (January 17, 1934), p. 84.

"... a revolution, an economic and social collapse, unprecedented in immensity and severity, creating conditions that are proving far beyond the power of routine and traditional ways of thinking and acting to meet."

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and criticized the church for not recognizing it. He



reprimanded the church for not adjusting its teaching to the social conditions of the time. Because its teaching had been neglected, the church had ceased to be a dynamic institution to many of its former adherents. Now it was attempting to use similar techniques in religious education. Lucock expressed his own feelings as he said:

"The major facts of our world today are social facts; the major emphasis of our religious education has been on individual conduct. The prevailing picture of the moral struggle in the world has been unreal in that it has been not plumbed deep enough to uncover the real immoralities in the structure of society which result in the enrichment of the few and the exploitation of the millions, or the fundamental paganism of the profit motive as the chief and all sufficient incentive of human action . . . . The result has been that people have been trained to become perfectly adjusted to an environment which no one with the spirit and outlook of Jesus has any business being adjusted to." #

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# Ibid., p. 85.

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Moehlman, writing ten years later, presents what might perhaps be regarded as an extreme reaction to the warning of Lucock:

"Christianity is a minority in our population. The religion of the American majority is democracy." #

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# C. H. Moehlman, School and Church: The American Way, preface, p. iv.

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The idea of a crisis is a recurrent one. Toynbee



and Sorokin saw it in the perspective of total civil-izations. Sidney Hook sees it in a narrower sphere, more intimately related to our problem of religious education in the schools. He states that the situation out of which the desire to introduce religious instruction grows is the absence of a unifying faith and an authoritative set of values.

"What is called the 'spiritual crisis of our time', the quest for certain integrating values to guide us amidst the unprecedented problems of our time, testifies to the fact that there is no commonly agreed philosophy of life in the community." #

*could mean  
Schmitt's  
of  
Civility*

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# S. Hook, "Moral Values and/or Religion in our Schools", Progressive Education, Vol. 23, (May 1946), p. 256.

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Coe # follows a somewhat similar argument in

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# G. A. Coe, "Shall the State Teach Religion?" School and Society, Vol. 51, (Feb. 1940), p. 129-33.

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discussing the church and school program. He sees this problem taking on new forms both in theories of education and in steps toward new procedures in the schools. The main reason for this view (as far as mental drives are concerned), seems to be a fear for civilization that has been inspired by contemporary trends.

"The possibility that communism may displace our disintegrating economic order produces



terror and a calling upon God. The persistence of war and the increasing horror of it, make the centuries-old preaching of peace seem weak. The failure of nationalism to master some of the elementary functions of government adds to the sense of insecurity. The race is voyaging through tempestuous seas, where - so it is thought - nothing is dependable except an upward look away from earth. ...All these anxieties contribute to a growing opinion that religious doctrines, attitudes and habits should be wrought into our civilization by including specifically religious teaching within the universal education of the young." #

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# Ibid., p. 129.

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Finally, let us consider the argument of V. T. Thayer, who specifically sets out to show the conditions which have been responsible for the comparatively recent growth of pressure for religious education in the public schools.# He sees in American

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# V. T. Thayer, Religion in Public Education, p. 42 ff.

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society the growth of a questioning, doubtful and uncertain attitude through the past three decades. He writes:

"Scarcely was the Armistice signed before the 'softening-up process' of fear and doubt and intolerance began to operate in the country... . Then ... came the depression of the Thirties. The suffering engendered by unemployment and the resulting cut-throat competition of man against man for the privilege of earning one's daily bread tended further to undermine men's confidence



in time-honored principles of democracy as well as men's generous attitudes towards differences in race, color and creed." #

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# Ibid., p. 44.

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Paralleling the depression was the steady retreat of democracy in Europe. There followed a loss of confidence in political and economic institutions, and a rapid change in religious outlook in America.

"... These trying years, particularly the depression years, brought to large numbers of people, the intelligentsia as well as the run-of-the-mine individual, the conviction that our civilization is in a process of disintegration." #

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# Ibid., p. 49.

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If conditions were such, says Thayer, as to bewilder and disillusion youth, then education between 1918 and the depression of the 1930's did nothing to direct them, but rather ignored its task of helping young people. By the Thirties, when education, shocked by the depression and awakening to new practices, was showing promising trends, the economic conditions of the times prevented their implementation. The doubts and the fears of the people grew.

"Economic uncertainty, racial and religious antagonism, resulting often in violence and the intimidation of minorities, confusion and frustration in the minds of youth, who began to feel themselves a group apart, a lost generation - all these began to generate a



fear that old foundations were washing away." #

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# Ibid., p. 73.

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Doubt and fear have caused man to react more or less characteristically through the ages.

"It is a psychological fact that fear prompts people to revert to early patterns of behavior ... to react as [they were] wont to do in childhood. ... It is not surprising, therefore, to ... find many serious-minded people turning to religion as an anchor to windward ... [and] ... willing to have their children taught [religion in the schools] ". #

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# Ibid., p. 74.

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All of these expressions imply that man faces a crisis and that in a crisis man turns to religion.

The point we wish to make here is not that every person sees a crisis of the scope suggested by Toynbee or Sorokin. The crisis may be merely an individual one. Nor do we wish to infer from our survey that as a result of a crisis all people will turn to religion. Rather, we wish to state that of people who are aware of a crisis, some will turn to conventional religion. We put forward this statement because we believe that to a large extent it underlies the problem of religious education in the schools. Let us examine the problem further.

Why is the present pressure directed toward



religious education in the schools? Let us look at the facts. We have seen that about one hundred years ago secularism began to supersede sectarianism in the public schools of Britain, the United States and Canada. The past century has also seen a broadening and an increase in the diversity of thought and opinion. The growth of the principle of a free, general education, the spread of the concept of democracy and the rise of other ideas of government, the harvest of science, the linking influence of transportation and communication, have all resulted in a more critical, more self-expressive, if less uniform, attitude on the part of the people. To many people these conditions are symptomatic of a disintegrating society. As Coe says:

"The obsolescence of some old standards of conduct is interpreted by some as a general breakdown of moral life through lack of conviction and the authority of religion." #

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# G. A. Coe, "Shall the State Teach Religion?", School and Society, Vol. 51, Feb.(1940), p. 130.

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To such persons religion seems to be a cohesive force which should be applied to the world. Consequently they advocate the introduction of religious education into the public schools as an antidote to what appear to them to be undesirable qualities in the youth of



today.

In the same way, a feeling of crisis will precipitate a demand for religious instruction. When a state of unsettlement prevails, when the world is 'going to pot', it is to the welfare of our children that we look. If some section of mankind feels that a 'return to religion' is the answer to its problems, it will not omit the children from that influence. People will feel that in order to protect or preserve society and its institutions they must get at their children. There is no better place to reach those children than in the schools. Consequently they advocate religious education.

Let us now turn to the arguments which are put forth by those who advocate this religious instruction in the public schools as a way out of the crisis, - an antidote to the evils they see in society and youth today. What do these people hope to achieve? What are their aims and objectives?

Probably the most frequent and most persuasive argument in support of religious instruction in public schools is that it improves moral behaviour. It is argued that only religion can cause men to follow the path of morality. Furthermore, since moral character is essential for good government,



it is agreed that democracy as well as morality must be rooted in conventional religion. We cannot neglect giving to our children this basis for morality and democracy. To people of this conviction the schools are the best instrument for achieving this end. It is toward achieving such an end that statements such as the following are directed:

"What is the situation in religious illiteracy in New York City? There are 1,200,000 children receiving education in public, private and parochial schools. Only 700,000 of these children are receiving any organized spiritual nurture. The remaining 500,000 children are a menace to society, to themselves, to our country, and to our country's future. Spiritual illiteracy must be abolished for the sake of the children and for the sake of the nation. Released time for religious education is the next best step we know in stamping out the spiritual illiteracy of our children." #

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# V. T. Thayer, Religion in Public Education, p. 77. quoting from a folder entitled "Protestantism Unites in Its Christian Education, A Practical Program of Co-operation", published at 14 West 44th Street, New York 18, N. Y., issued by the Division of Christian Education of the Protestant Council of New York.

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J. C. Fehr writes:

"According to Rt. Rev. Ignatius Smith, O.P., another prominent churchman, 'five million children are being raised [in America] without thought of soul, God, conscience or the value of human personality'". #

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# J. C. Fehr, "America Re-Awakens", Catholic World, Vol. 152, (January 1941), p. 435.

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These children, says Fehr, are living in a religious void and must be given religious instruction which will give them a stable philosophy of life.

In Thayer we see another instance of the same argument.

"The fifty per cent of our children who are not now receiving any training in religion because of parental neglect or other reasons should not be denied this most important element in their complete social history. ... Social welfare is jeopardized as much or even more if any child is denied his right to know and to make use of all that society has learned in the area of religion'.

The arguments quoted are in support of a program of religious education on released time." #

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# Op. Cit. p. 78

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Religious illiteracy is thus regarded as a public menace which should be recognized by the state. Consequently, provision should be made in the public school for religious instruction of the children. Secular public education without religious instruction is not preparing our youth adequately for its place in society.

"Education is intended to be much more than the process of acquiring a superficial gloss of culture, information or occupational attitude. Being more important even than the system of government, a system of education so oriented does not frown upon religious instruction but on the contrary makes it the cornerstone upon which to build a stable philosophy of life.



"Relegating religious categories into the background, it [education] has placed its imprimatur upon a secularized system of miscellaneous instruction which now passes for education." #

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# J. C. Fehr, Op. Cit., p. 453

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It would follow, then, that religious education must be introduced into the public schools.

Among the arguments put forth for religious instruction is the claim that education alone is insufficient in preparing our youth for democracy.

"It must be equally clear that education alone, at least in the sense of mere transmission of knowledge, is far from being sufficient to produce the complete citizen of a democracy. ... We are told that education should be for life, that education should be related to living. We are told that to live is to act, that education should therefore be related to action. But human action is necessarily moral action, and thus education for living, for life, should certainly include moral education. ... Religion, at the very least, religious morality, is indispensable to the very notion of religious education." #

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# R. J. Cushing, "Religion in Liberal Arts Education", Vital Speeches, Vol. 13, (Mar 15, 1947), p. 336.

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J. J. Reilly agrees with Archbishop Cushing that our morality and consequently democracy is rooted in religion.

"Democracy, he holds, 'derives its reason for being, its life, its vitality, its spiritual force solely from religion, because the freedom and the rights that constitute democracy have their origin in God from whom they come as free



gifts to man. ... The democratic conception of the dignity of the human being, the worth of human personality, has its foundation in religion. Religion teaches that man is the handiwork of the Creator, that we are individually His children and made in His image and likeness." #

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# V. T. Thayer, Religion in Public Education, p. 101, quoting Dr. J. J. Reilly in radio address series entitled "God and American Education."

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The essence of these remarks is that morality and democracy - that is, the democratic principles implicit in the democratic way of life - can be taught effectively in the schools only when they are positively grounded in religion. From this it would follow that the secular public school which does not provide specifically for religious education is not fulfilling its function.

Another argument put forth for religious instruction in the schools is that such instruction is necessary "to meet the universal need and increasing demand for dynamic religion to act against widespread immorality and deterioration of ethical standards characteristic of the present". # In other words,

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# G. H. Betts, "Aims of Week-day Religious Education", Religious Education, Vol. 17, (Feb. 1922), pp. 11-15.

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morality, to be taught effectively, requires the underpinning of religion. Consequently, to develop sound ideas of morality it is necessary to introduce



religious education into the schools. This is the thesis of F. Lynch, writing on "Religion and the Schools".

"These [morals and ethics] grow out of religion, but they are not religion, and personally I doubt if they are much use when they are dissociated from religion. ... Children can be transformed and nurtured only by religion ... and my opinion is that the more Christian it is, the surer and greater the transformation is." #

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# F. Lynch, "Religion and the Schools", Christian Century, Vol. 43, (April 29, 1926), p. 546.

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Lynch quotes the Bishop of Durham and Lord Hugh Cecil to substantiate his view.

"'Effective morality is to my mind inconceivable apart from religious training. In none other is there salvation.'" (Bishop of Durham)

"'That is not Christian religious education at all, merely to teach people to be honorable, to "play the game", to be clean living in the broad sense of avoiding anything disgusting and hateful. ... Nothing that does not train people to be and feel themselves to be members of the body of Christ is worth having.'" (Lord Hugh Cecil)

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# Ibid., p. 546.

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If we are to accept these views as sound, then religious education, because it involves morality, should be introduced into the schools.

The charge is often made that juvenile



delinquency results from the omission of religious influences in the lives of children and can be checked only by bringing religion back into the schools. Belief in such an idea prompted the following statement to be presented before a Congress of Religious Education in California in 1926, as a reason for introducing religious instruction into the schools:

"The recent alarming increase in juvenile delinquency, the flaunting disrespect for law, the challenge of conventions of marriage, society, even of morality itself, and the acuteness of international relations, plead for religious education. Wiser measures will furnish needed elements of truth, of motive, of social consciousness, of moral dynamics - of God Himself. The trend for ten years has brought us to a crisis imperilling our people and our civilization." #

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# J. L. Corley, "Week-day Religious Training Debated", Christian Century, Vol. 43, (March 23, 1926), p.394.

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A similar belief of the inadequacy of present day secular education because of the lack of religious education in the schools prompted Dr. A. L. Kinsolving of Boston to deliver the following sermon:

"If priests, ministers, and rabbis were given an hour in the public schools several times a week, to meet their own children and teach them the Scriptures and the way of life, it would cost the government nothing, do the ministers a lot of good, give many of them just what they crave, reduce juvenile delinquency, create a new church. ... It is secular education, divorced from religious impulse and moral objective that is found



wanting. ... There never was a time when religion was given so little recognition in education. ... We must reinstate religion in the public schools.'" #

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# E. J. Root, "Urges Clergy in Public Schools", Christian Century, Vol. 52, (July 3, 1935), p. 900

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The following statement, while it is taken from a pamphlet which aims at encouraging Sunday School attendance, also has application to our examination.

"There are a number of outstanding facts which have come to light relative to the value of Bible teaching to children. The following are a few examples:

"In a certain police court, 4000 boys were examined and it was discovered that only three were members of Sunday schools when the crime was committed.

"In another court, of 8000 cases, less than three per cent had ever had any religious education in home, school or church.

"Statistics show that Canadian Sunday School attendance is decreasing and it would appear that, with the decrease of Sunday School attendance, goes the increase of juvenile crime.

"Our daily papers view with alarm the increase in juvenile delinquency. If our boys and girls are to be kept out of the police courts, they must be kept in Sunday School. Surely these statistics indicate the value of Sunday School work in the making of good citizens." #

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# G. Mitchell, The Future of Your Child, published by The Home Evangelical Book Shop, 418 Church Street, Toronto, Ontario.

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While the above statement speaks of Sunday Schools, it has application to our problem in that it suggests that Bible teaching will prevent juvenile delinquency -



a claim which is also made for religious education in the schools.

In the light of all the above statements that religious education in the public schools would prevent or reduce juvenile delinquency, one must conclude that unless this religious instruction is introduced into the schools, society will suffer.

There is a further argument put forth by the proponents of religious education. It concerns itself with the young people generally, and is expressed in the statement that "the training of the young, especially at the formative levels of high school and college, has on the whole been drained of a social dynamic and a directive which the mediaeval church provided." # There is a feeling

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# H. L. Parsons, "Church, State and Schools",  
New Republic, Vol. 113, (Oct. 1, 1945), p. 440

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among some people that the youth of today, unhampered by religious restraints, is deviating from the path of their fathers and that this deviation is considered unhealthy.

"The real danger in present day morals is to be found in the changing mental attitudes so alarmingly evident among young people toward what they term archaic and outworn rules of life and conduct. ... Large segments of the human family have deliberately sought to free themselves from the rigid restraints which religion fastened upon private morals.



"The eventual recovery ... can come only through the proper education and rearing ... of our children. ... they will not be able to cope with them [great problems] unless they are in their formative years prepared through discipline, inconvenience, discomfort and menial tasks to recognize the ultimate truth that education ... deals with the spirits, not the fortunes of men." #

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# J. C. Fehr, Op. Cit. p. 437-8.

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It would appear, then that if our youth is to be kept on 'the gold standard' religious instruction must be introduced into the public schools.

Aside from these moral motives for which people advocate religious education, a more selfish one also seems to be discernible. It seems to be implied in statements such as the following:

"More and more people are constantly being alienated from religion. Many countries in which education was once religious in the sense that it aimed at a supernatural philosophy of life have one by one forsaken the faith and their people have long lived in a religious void." #

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# Ibid., p. 435.

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These motives originate in the fear that unless the schools are used to present religious education, the churches will shortly lack public support and will dwindle in enrolment and power. Moehlman claims that the 286 religious bodies in the United States claim only forty-three per cent



of the population. He remarks:

"In 1936, the five-to-seventeen age population in the United States was 31,618,000. The total Sunday School enrolment was less than five million. About fifty-seven per cent of the Catholic five-to-seventeen-year-old children were not in parochial schools. In Protestant parochial schools the total enrolment was only 275,643. Between 1926 and 1936, Sunday School enrolment decreased forty per cent. In that year the United States Baptists had over 3,000,000 less Sunday School pupils than church members." #

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# C. R. Moehlman, School and Church, the American Way, p. 123.

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To men and women concerned with perpetuating and expanding their institutions of religion, this shift from the church is alarming. They see in the schools an instrument which will check this trend. By introducing religious education into the schools they can increase interest, and through interest, enrolments in the church. Thayer quotes Blair as an example of this attitude.

"Neither the Sunday school, the vacation church school, nor the young people's societies, nor all these combined, reach as high a percentage of the total youth group in a great many communities as does the week-day school." #

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# V. T. Thayer, Religion in the Public Schools, p. 86, quoting W. D. Blair in the Church Monthly, (May 1940).

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Thayer continues:



"According to Blair, the plan of releasing pupils from school during the school day, in order that they may attend church schools, results in an enrolment of ninety to ninety-nine per cent of the public school constituency in many localities. And this in turn, it is hoped, will eventually swell the rosters of the churches." #

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# Ibid., p. 88.

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In securing the opportunity to instruct a child in the school, a sect can attempt to interest the child in its church. As E. L. Shaver (quoted by Thayer) remarks:

"'Wherever a cooperative church school has been in operation, it has succeeded in reaching on the average one third of this neglected half of our children and youth, a remarkable evangelistic record.'" #

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# Ibid., pp. 89-90.

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Such, then, are the aims and objectives of the groups and individuals advocating religious education in the schools. These aims are concerned primarily with democracy, morality and juvenile delinquency. Less markedly, they concern themselves with the waywardness of youth and with church membership. The claim is made that it is necessary to introduce religious education into the schools in order to underwrite democracy and morality and to decrease



juvenile delinquency and crime. Let us examine these claims individually.

The proponents of religious education claim that religion provides a basis for democracy. Therefore, they argue, we must include religious instruction in the schools so children may benefit from its influence. The religious education these people propose is sectarian religion, - in the majority of the cases, based on Christianity. Evidently, then, democracy depends not merely upon religion but upon one religion, the Christian, - Hebrew-Christian at most.

Few will deny that the Hebrew prophets made a significant contribution to the evolution of democracy. They asserted the rights of the humble against the powerful. They proclaimed the concept of the worth of the individual, and promoted the idea of the equality of man in the eyes of God. But, as Thayer says, this was only half the picture.

"The Hebrew ideal of government was a theocracy, not a democracy, and even the concept of social democracy occasionally pictured in the Bible remained far more an ideal than a reality." #

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# Ibid., pp. 106-7.

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The Bible has been used as an authority to prove many opposing points of view. Although a basic tenet



of democracy implies equality of all men, the churches of the United States divided on the issue of slavery only a century ago, and each one quoted from the Bible to support its position. # And only

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# C. R. Moehlman, The Church as Educator, p. 20.

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three hundred years ago in the country which is probably the greatest democracy, kings ruled by 'divine right' as 'God's ministers' by sanction of the Bible. In struggles between democracy and totalitarianism, men of both sides had equal faith that their cause was just in the light of the Bible and in the eyes of God. Von Papen hailed the Concordat between Pope Pius XI and Hitler thus:

"'The Third Reich is the first power in the world not only to recognize but to translate into practice the high principles of the Papacy.' He also proclaimed that Nazism was 'the Christian countermovement against the spirit of 1789... . We therefore stand at the beginning of a Christian revolution!'" #

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# Ibid., Preface, p.v.

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Rather than having developed our governmental institutions out of our religions, it may be more probable that the development of our social institutions has paralleled that of our religions, each perhaps drawing from the other, so that the two have appeared to be associated. As Frederick Mayer says:



"Religions of the world, like Hinduism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity are so closely identified with the cultural environment in which they developed that their essential mission has become obscured. They have frequently become spokesmen for their civilizations. Thus, during the world wars the ministers of the warring nations prayed to a national God, and all attempted to show why Divine intervention would take place on their side. Religion in America is guided by the success motive, and we hear preachers say: 'Be religious and you will be successful.' Antiquated social institutions like the caste system are being upheld in part by theological theories." #

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# F. Mayer, "Education for World Religion", Religious Education, Vol. 43, (Mar.-April, 1948), p. 79.

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Democracy has always been a growing, living thing, It never has been and cannot be a static institution, but must be pliable to the wishes of the people. Our concept of government has changed from 'privilege for a few' in the reign of King John' to 'democracy for the many' at present. It has its roots in the past and although it has drawn from the Hebrew-Christian religion, it has in its process of evolution drawn from other sources along the way. As Thayer states:

"The fact is that democracy, as we envisage it today, derives from plural sources: in part from Hebrew and Christian, in part from the Greeks; in large measure from the philosophy of the Stoics and from the Roman law which gave expression to Stoic principles;



from economic developments in Europe since the fifteenth century; from the fearless methods of thinking developed by modern science; and in no small degree for the relations of man to man which were peculiar to life on the frontier." #

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# V. T. Thayer, Religion in Public Education, p.106.

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History does not seem to justify the view that the principles of democracy require the acceptance of a religious conception of life.

Thayer quotes Sidney Hook to show that logic also fails to sustain the above contention.

"As Hook points out: 'From the alleged fact that all men are equal before God, it does not follow logically that they are, or should be, equal before the state or enjoy equal rights in the community. Even in the theological scheme, although God is equally the creator of angels, men, animals and things, they are not equal in value before him'. And is it not a cardinal principle of democracy that a man is a man irrespective of origin and entitled to equal and open opportunity for the development of his potentialities." #

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# Ibid., p. 107.

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Thayer quotes Hook again to show that men have used religion to justify both equality and inequality.

"Some Christians have held - with as much logic as their brethren who drew contrary conclusions - that because all men are equally sinners in the sight of the Lord, their social and political inequalities in this transitory life are unimportant." #

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# Ibid., p. 107.

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It seems that neither logic nor history can support the claim that religion - more specifically, one type of religion - underwrites democracy.

Let us return to the claim regarding religious instruction in the public schools as a basis for democracy - that evidently democracy depends not only upon religion but (on the basis of the teaching proposed) upon one religion, Christianity. What does this mean? Literally, it means that we cannot expect a democratic union of the nations of the world until all people are converted to a religion in the Christian tradition; that inter-national morality and government cannot rest on a number of cultures. Yet each nation, each society, considers its own culture and religion equally good. Would it not be wise to take the attitude of Carl Seashore of the University of Iowa, writing on "One World, One Religion".

"A good religion is an attitude towards some supreme power other than self which results in a progressive realization of truth, goodness and beauty in life. This is a definition which holds for all the great religions of the world regardless of their creed, historical background, civilizations, theories or philosophies." #

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# C. E. Seashore, "One World, One Religion", School and Society, Vol. 64, (Sept. 7, 1946), pp. 161-2.

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There is something common to all great religions.



Furthermore, in its own society, each religion is regarded with reverence. As Ghandi said:

"Every nation considers its own faith to be as good as any other." #

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# C. R. Moehlman, The Church as Educator, p. 34.

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Would it not be better to show that despite the particular development of each culture and religion man generally has been looking for the same answers and searching for the same goal.

"... Frank points out that despite all 'differences in size, shape, color and some psychological functions, man as a species is essentially alike everywhere.' Everywhere, also, man encounters what Frank calls persistent tasks of life, problems associated with the gaining of food, clothing, shelter, security, with organizing group life and regulating human conduct by transforming compulsive behaviour into standards, codes and methods of living cherished by a group. In seeking to realize these ends he evolves assumptions about himself, about nature and the world. Out of these assumptions grow his religion, his philosophy, his art, and his social, economic and political institutions. Now as we examine these varying philosophies, religions and practices, we discover certain valuable insights into man's nature and his need, and we observe also that no one cultural expression is complete or adequate in itself. Each is limited, partial, and can with profit be supplemented by the insights of others." #

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# V. T. Thayer, Religion and Public Education, p.108, quoting L. P. Frank, "World Order and Cultural Diversity", Free World, (June 1942).

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In a world which needs to find a common goal of



peace and unity towards which all nations can strive, it is important that the education of our youth should include an acquaintance with, as well as a respect for, the cultures and religions of other places. We must respect the ideas of other people besides cherishing our own. We cannot afford to inculcate into the minds of our youth narrow conceptions of religion or of race. On this basis also, we cannot justify sectarian religious education in the schools.

If we consider religion in its broadest sense as a way of life, then democracy and religion may have common ground. However, there seems to be no justifiable reason for believing that public schools must include instruction in sectarian religious education in order to insure a loyalty to the principle of democracy.

Let us now turn to the problem of religion and morals.

The advocates of religious education argue that morality requires a religious basis and consequently contend that to insure morality in our youth we must introduce religious instruction into the schools. What does this imply? It would seem that morality and ethics require 'outside' support; that good conduct is foreign to human nature. It would seem to imply that morality is based and dependent on religion.



But is this true? Many people support such a point of view.

Edward Caird, in his Evolution of Religion, writes:

"Man's relation to God is inevitably conceived as the ground of a social relation between himself and other beings like himself, which determines at once their practical obligations to him and his practical obligations to them.

"In this sense, then, we may say that, as is a man's religion, so is his morality. As he conceives of his relation to the power which determines his place in the world - and especially his place in relation to other men who with him are the members of one society - so also he conceives of the duty which he owes to them. Those who have denied that in early times religion had anything to do with morality, really meant that it does not produce what we call moral conduct. And to this it is sufficient to answer that their religion is not what we call religion. But it would be absurd to say that at any time man's relation to the beings he conceived as divine has not had a determining influence on his view of his relations to his fellow-men, and of the conduct therefore incumbent on him. ...Perhaps we might even go farther and say that ... religion and morality are necessary correlates of each other, and that it is impossible to elevate one of them without also elevating the other." #

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# E. Caird, The Evolution of Religion, p. 236-7.

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W. R. Inge holds a similar point of view. He says:

"Religion and Ethics are, for a Christian, inseparable. There are unethical religions, and there are irreligious ethical schools or societies; but these are not Christian. Ethical societies, in spite of their moral earnestness,



seem dry and ineffective; and an unethical religion may sometimes be worse than no religion at all. ...

"The moving force in ethical religion is the natural attraction which goodness, truth, and beauty exercise upon a healthy mind led, as we believe, by the Holy Spirit. ...Man longs to transcend his empirical self and its surroundings; he stretches forward towards the eternal values, and he finds them in morality, in science, and in art.

"It is through the divine life in men, the Christ in us, that Ethics belong to the eternal or spiritual world, and that moral conduct becomes as it were the sacrament, the outward and visible sign, of faith, hope, and love directed to a Being who in His nature sits above the conflict between right and wrong. What is relative and subjective in morality is thus anchored to absolute truth and goodness." #

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# W. R. Inge, Christian Ethics and Modern Problems, p. 379.

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E. H. Sneath in The Evolution of Ethics speaks of the emphasis moral values receive in the sphere of religion. This emphasis, he feels is particularly true in the Hebrew and Christian religions in which the moral values are supreme. These values "are thus recognized to be supreme because, as a matter of fact, they are so." # The highest values of true religions

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# E. H. Sneath, The Evolution of Ethics, p. 359.

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are ethical, and all other forms of religious life have value only as they contribute to the realization of righteousness. He quotes from Professor Browne's book, The Essence of Religion:



"'Whatever our theological faith, whatever our religious practices, and whatever our religious pedagogics, their sole use and value consist in helping us to live lives of love and righteousness before God and man.'" #

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# Ibid., p. 359-60.

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The conception of God as a God of Righteousness in the higher religions relates to motivation in the moral life. To believe in a God who rewards virtue and punishes vice, says Sneath, proves to be a powerful dynamic in the moral life of the individual and of society, although it does not always result in the highest type of morality. The concept of a God of Righteousness also furnishes a powerful inspiration to the cause of righteousness. Furthermore, man is inspired and sustained through the belief in the immortality of virtue. Sneath summarizes his argument:

"In conclusion, it may be said that the recognition of the supremacy of moral values, and a statement of what these values are, together with belief in a God of righteousness, who rewards virtue and punishes vice; who is in the world working for righteous ends, co-operating with those who are laboring for the realization of life's supreme values; and belief in the immortal nature of those values; - these are the noblest contributions that religion has made to human life." #

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# Ibid., p. 370.

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E. W. Barnes discusses morals in terms of absolutes. He argues "that the two realms of nature and moral purpose belong to a single scheme, and that the God of Nature is also the Source of the moral values of which we are conscious." # In other

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# E. W. Barnes, Scientific Theory and Religion, p. 605.

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words he conceives of absolute morality as being an attribute of God.

"Our ethical principles are not merely our own. We may differ as to what is the right course of conduct in certain circumstances. But the difference will arise from a conflict between different ethical loyalties and not from dispute as to whether ultimate principles are good or evil. The moral law is universal, although it may be imperfectly apprehended by even the highest in moral attainment. Yet as we reflect upon experience, and criticise in intersubjective intercourse the results of our reflection, we get an ever fuller apprehension of the moral order. We thus discover that which is objectively valid." #

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# Ibid., p. 607.

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However, Barnes does not deny that moral consciousness has been formed by the necessities of the social order and that it is ultimately a product of man's reaction to his environment. Morality is most certainly the result of a process of development. Moreover, the conduct and principles of men have changed with the growth of civilization. It is by the



growth of understanding, by reflection upon the world in which he finds himself, that man has been led from grossly imperfect moral judgments to a more adequate appreciation of the moral law. But we cannot deny the objectivity of such judgments. The historical process by which man has become aware of values can be described in rough outline; but we must not confuse this process with the construction of the values themselves, says Barnes.

"Man in his development has merely discovered morality. Thus he has not created ethical principles though he has increasingly taken them to be criteria by which conduct is regulated." #

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# Ibid., p. 603.

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The discovery of the moral law has been a slow process. It began when elementary moral judgments were applied by the family or tribal group to particular actions and issues. Such judgments were the outcome of a critical examination of intuitive judgments of value made by individuals. These judgments may be erroneous. How are we to eliminate this possibility of error? Barnes' answer is that the critical examination at its moral experience will in the end enable humanity to discover moral law. Humanity constructs an increasingly perfect system of ethical principles by a process of critical analysis which continuously removes the contradictions



which arise from the different judgments of individuals. In the end we shall reach a system of moral principles which is objectively valid.

"We must think of the elements of morality ... as uniting to form an organic whole, some unity which resembles an organism rather than aggregate. As we learn to appreciate such organic wholes our moral experience grows. With its growth we are enabled more and more completely to see ethical principles as a system. We thus reach the idea of the Absolute Good; and, though our comprehension is never perfect, our discovery of the objectively valid moral order becomes progressively the more complete." #

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# Ibid., p. 604.

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Reinhold Niebuhr also conceives of morality in terms of absolutes. He sees religion making a distinct contribution to morality, in its "comprehension of depth in life". A secular moral act resolves the conflicts of interest and passion, revealed in any immediate situation by whatever means prudence may suggest, the most usual counsel being that of moderation. A religious morality by its sense of a 'dimension of depth' traces every force with which it deals to some ultimate origin, and relates every purpose to its ultimate end. It is concerned not only with immediate values but with the problem of good and evil; not only with immediate objectives, but with ultimate hopes. Man is not capable of solving his moral problems by himself. He needs God's help.



All life is dynamic; religious faith seeks for the solution of the problem of evil by focussing its gaze upon the beginning and the end of this dynamic process, upon God the creator and the God the fulfilment of existence.

"The dimension of depth in the consciousness of religion creates the tension between what is and what it ought to be. It bends the bow from which every arrow of moral action flies. Every truly moral act seeks to establish what ought to be, because the agent feels obligated to the ideal, though historically unrealized, as being the order of life in its more essential reality. Thus the Christian believes that the ideal of life is real in the will and nature of God, even though he knows of no place in history where the ideal has been realized in its pure form. And it is because it has this reality that he feels the pull of obligation. ...The 'pull' or 'drive' of moral life is a part of the religious tension of life. Man seeks to realize in history what he conceives to be already the truest reality - that is, its final essence.

"The ethical fruitfulness of various types of religion is determined by the quality of their tension between the historical and the transcendent. This quality is measured by two considerations: The degree to which the transcendent truly transcends every value and achievement of history, so that no relative value of historical achievement may become the basis of moral complacency; and the degree to which the transcendent remains in organic contact with the historical, so that no degree of tension may rob the historical of its significance." #

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# R. Niebuhr, An Interpretation of Christian Ethics, p. 8-9.

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The significance of Hebrew-Christian religion lies in the fact that the tension between the ideal and the real which religion creates can be maintained



at any point in history (no matter what the moral and social achievement has been), because the ultimate ideal always transcends every historical fact and reality.

"...There are two resources in human nature to which this religio-moral discipline must be related: The natural endowments of sympathy, paternal and filial affection, gregarious impulses and the sense of organic cohesion which all human beings possess, and the faculties of reason which tend to extend the range of these impulses beyond the limits set by nature." #

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# Ibid., p. 202-3.

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Reason can provide principles of criticism and norms but no rational moral idealism can create the dynamics for moral conduct.

The dynamics of Chrstian religion are found in the Christian doctrine of perfect love and the Christian faith in God which supports it. Man is under obligation to emulate the love of God, to forgive as God forgives, to love his enemies as God loves them.

"The Christian love commandment does not demand love of the fellow man because he is with us equally divine ..., or because we ought to have 'respect for personality' ..., but because God loves him. The obligation is derived, in other words, not from the obvious unities and affinities of historic existence, but from the transcendent unity of essential reality." #

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# Ibid., p. 213.

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"The Christian doctrine of love is thus the most adequate metaphysical and psychological framework for the approximation of the ideal of love in human life. It is able to appropriate all the resources of human nature which tend toward the harmony of life with life, without resting in the resources of 'natural man'. It is able to set moral goals transcending nature without being lost in other-worldliness. The degree of approximation depends upon the extent to which the Christian faith is not merely a theory, but a living and vital presupposition of life and conduct. The long history of Christianity is, in spite of its many failures, not wanting in constant and perennial proofs that love is the fruit of its spirit. Martyrs and saints, missionaries and prophets, apostles and teachers of the faith, have showed forth in their lives the pity and tenderness toward their fellow men which is the crown of the Christian life. Nor has Christianity failed to impart to the ordinary human relations of ordinary men the virtues of tenderness and consideration." #

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# Ibid., p. 214-15.

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However, the moral fruits of religion are not the consequence of a conscious effort to achieve them.

"The love commandment is a demand upon the will, but the human will is not enabled to conform to it because moralistic appeals are made to obey the commandment. Moralistic appeals are in fact indications of the dissipation of primary religious vitality. Men cannot, by taking thought, strengthen their will. If the will is the total organized personality of the moment, moving against recalcitrant impulse, the strength of the will depends upon the strength of the factors which enter into its organization. Consequently, the acts and attitudes of love in which the ordinary resources of nature are supplemented are partly the consequence of historic and traditional disciplines which have become a part of the socio-spiritual inheritance of the individual



and partly the result of concatenations of circumstance in which the pressure of events endows the individual with powers not ordinarily his own. " #

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# Ibid., p. 215.

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"The moral effectiveness of the religious life thus depends upon deeper resources than moral demands upon the will. Whenever the modern pulpit contends itself with the presentation of these demands, however urgent and fervent, it reveals its enslavement to the rationalistic, presuppositions of our era. The law of love is not obeyed simply by being known. Whenever it is obeyed at all, it is because life in its beauty and terror has been more fully revealed to man. The love that cannot be willed may nevertheless grow as a natural fruit upon a tree which has roots deep enough to be nurtured by springs of life beneath the surface and branches reaching up to heaven." #

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# Ibid., p. 220.

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These, then, are some of the views supporting the contention that religion is basic to morality. However, in opposition to the foregoing viewpoints, we find many rational and convincing arguments that morality has no basis in religion.

Westermarck, in his Christianity and Morals, states:

"While the origin of religion may be traced to the feeling of uncanniness and mystery, moral consciousness has an entirely different foundation." #

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# E. Westermarck, Christianity and Morals, p. 6.

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Sidney Hook makes a more positive statement in the same vein.

"The history of moral insight from Socrates to Dewey, from Democritus to Santayana, is sufficient to show that the meaning and validity of moral insight does not require any theological underpinnings. ...There is no evidence ... that beliefs in the existence of the supernatural is an essential condition for public order or private morality." #

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# S. Hook, "Moral Values and/or Religion in Our Schools", Progressive Education, Vol. 23, (May 1946), p. 257.

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In primitive societies with elementary religions which consist mainly of ritual, the members still adhere to the ethical code of their societies. As Westermarck says: "... savages follow their own rules of morality no less strictly, or perhaps more strictly, than civilized people follow theirs." # He

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# Op. Cit., p. 29.

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adds:

"... It is common experience that contact with a higher civilization exercises a deteriorating moral influence upon the conduct of uncultured races, although we may be sure that Christian missionaries do not fail to impart the doctrine of Hell to their savage converts." #

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# Ibid., p. 29.

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Religious devotion is not necessarily accompanied by a strict morality. People who profess religious



beliefs most fervently are not necessarily the most moral. Westermarck illustrates this point:

"A Christian of the seventh century, who was canonized by the Church of Rome, described a good Christian as a man 'who comes frequently to church, who presents the oblation which is offered to God upon the altar; who doth not taste fruits of his own industry until he has consecrated a part of them to God; who, when the holy festivals approach, lives chastely even with his wife during several days, that with a safe conscience he may draw near the altar of God; and who, in the last place, can repeat the creed and the Lord's Prayer.' A scrupulous observance of external ceremonies - that is all which in this description is required of a good Christian. Smollet observes in his Travels Into Italy that it is held more infamous to transgress the slightest ceremonial institution of the Church of Rome than to transgress any moral duty; that a murderer or adulterer will be easily absolved by the Church, and even maintain his character in society; but that a man who eats a pigeon on a Saturday is abhorred as a minister of reprobation. ... And how many a Protestant does not imagine that by going to church on Sundays he may sin more freely on the six days between?" #

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# Ibid., p. 30.

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"When we study the moral rules laid down by the customs of savage peoples we find that they in a very large measure resemble the rules of civilized nations. In every savage community, homicide is prohibited by custom, and so is theft.



Savages also regard charity as a duty and praise generosity as a value, indeed their customs regarding mutual aid are often more exacting than our own; and many of them are conspicuous for their avoidance of telling lies. But in spite of the great similarity of moral commandments, there is at the same time a difference between the regard for life, property, truth, and the general well-being of a neighbor which displays itself in savage rules of morality and that which is found among ourselves: it has, broadly speaking, only reference to members of the same community or tribe. Among peoples more advanced in civilization the social unit has grown larger, the nation has taken the place of the tribe, and the circle within which the infliction of injuries is prohibited has extended accordingly." #

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# Ibid., p. 37.

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A basic point upon which a number of writers seem to agree is that morals have grown out of man's relationship to man throughout the ages. Religions may contain the ethics of their contemporary society, having absorbed these in a parallel growth but the moral code arises from man's relationships in society - from the primitive one of a few people to a complex modern civilization.

W. B. Smith remarks:



"It can clearly be shown that morals and justice and right are basic terms that antedated every human system of religion. The Christian religion is no exception to this fact. Morals have to do with conditioning the battle of life. Social morality arose in the dim and distant past, when two men began to hunt and fish and seek for pleasure over the same restricted area of the earth's surface. So its growth has continued to this day." #

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# W. B. Smith, "Indictment and a Challenge", Educational Review, Vol. 69, (April 1925), pp. 172-3.

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The origin of morality is stated more specifically by E. C. Lindeman, Professor of Social Psychology at Columbia University.

"Morality arises out of conflict. Where there is life there is conflict, and where there is conflict, a moral life begins." #

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# E. C. Lindeman, "Moral Life in a World of Conflicts", Religious Education, Vol. 42, (July-Aug. 1947), p.219.

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The moral precept evolved by society serves to make the new individual member conform to certain ways of life which the society feels desirable or necessary. As Will Durant says:

"It is one purpose of a moral code to adjust the unchanged - or slowly changing - impulses of human nature to the changing needs and circumstances of human life." #

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# W. Durant, The Story of Civilization, p. 51.

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So far, we have considered positive statements about the non-religious origins of morality. Westermarck



challenges the theological argument that religion is the basis of morals.

"The theological argument in favor of the objective validity of moral judgments, which is based on belief in an all-good God who has revealed his will to mankind, contains of course an assumption that cannot be proved scientifically. But even if it could be proved, would that justify the conclusion drawn from it? Those who maintain that they possess in such a revelation an absolute moral standard and that, consequently, any mode of conduct which is in accordance with it must be objectively right, may be asked what they mean by an all-good God? If God were not supposed to be all-good, we might certainly be induced by prudence to obey his decrees, but they could not lay claim to moral validity; suppose the devil were to take over the government of the world, what influence would that have on the moral values - would it make right wrong and wrong right? It is only the all-goodness of God that might give his commandments absolute moral validity. But to say that something is good because it is in accordance with the will of an all-good God is to reason in a circle; if goodness means anything it must have a meaning which is independent of his will. God is called good or righteous because he is supposed to possess certain qualities which we are used to call so: he is benevolent, he requites virtue and vice, and so forth. For such reasons do we add the attributes goodness and righteousness to his other attributes, which express qualities of an objective character, and by calling him all-good we attribute to him perfect goodness. #

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#(Westermarck's Footnote): Cf. Shaftesbury. "Whoever thinks there is a God and pretends formally to believe that he is just and good, must suppose that there is independently such a thing as justice and injustice, truth and falsehood, right and wrong; according to which he pronounces that God is just, righteous and true."

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As a matter of fact, there are also many theologians who consider moral distinctions to be antecedent to the divine commandments. Thomas Aquinas and



his school maintain that the right is not right because God wills it, but that God wills it because it is just.

"I have thus arrived at the conclusion that the attempts of philosophers and theologians to prove the objective validity of moral judgments give us no right to accept such validity as a fact. I am now prepared to take a step further and assert that it cannot exist." #

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# Op. Cit. pp. 32-3.

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Westermarck's conclusions regarding the influence of religion on morals do not agree with the claim that religion is basic to morality. He says:

"It has been claimed that 'Christianity has proved itself the highest ethical force in the history of man'; that all virtue and good conduct in mankind owe their origin to the Christian religion; that it has been the main source of the moral development of Europe. I have examined the influence which Christianity has exercised both on morals in general and within various departments of social and moral life, and arrived at different conclusions. It is interesting to note that even a theological writer like Dr. Inge says 'it is disquieting for Christians to have to admit that the growth of humanity, in the sense of humaneness does not owe much to the churches.'

'My criticism has not been based on any standard of 'moral objectivity' because I maintain that there is no such standard, moral judgments being ultimately based upon emotions, which vary in different individuals. It has been said that Christianity lifts morality out of mere relativity, and that 'the Christian point of view gives to conduct an absolute value', but as we have seen, there are in Christianity many different points of view." #

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# Ibid., pp. 410-11

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What then is the relation of religion to morality?



As was mentioned earlier, as morality and religion developed, the moral codes were taken up and identified with the religions. However, the religions had also retained some aspects of the magic of the past, and thus mystery and supernaturalism lent weight to social disapproval and law as influences for morality.

Durant says:

"... To provide, so to speak, an invisible watchman to strengthen the social impulses against the individualistic by powerful hopes and fears, societies have not invented, but made use of, religion.

"... Religion is not the basis of morals, but an aid to them; conceivably they could exist without it, and not infrequently they have progressed against its indifference or its obstinate resistance. ... as a rule religion sanctions not any absolute good (since there is none), but those norms of conduct which have established themselves by force of economic and social circumstances; like law it looks to the past for its judgments, and is apt to be left behind as conditions change and morals alter with them." #

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# W. Durant, The Story of Civilization, pp. 55, 70-71

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Religion, Durant says, supports morality by two means chiefly: myth and taboo.

Westermarck sees religion affecting morality in a similar way.

"From this survey of Christian ethics ... we now come to the question, how far they may be supposed to have influenced the morality of human conduct. The belief in a god who acts as a guardian of worldly morality undoubtedly gives emphasis to its rules. To the social and legal sanctions a new one is added, which derives



peculiar strength from the supernatural power and knowledge of the Deity. The divine avenger can punish those who are beyond the reach of human justice and those whose secret ways escape the censure of their fellow men; and the righteous God can also reward goodness which receives no other reward. Among the early Christians the hope of blessedness and especially the fear of eternal punishment must have exercised a powerful effect in connection with their belief in the imminence of the millenium." #

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# Op. Cit., p. 406

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Westermarck cautions, however, that there are also certain circumstances which detract considerably from the influence of the religious sanction when compared with other sanctions of morality. The supposed punishments and rewards of the future life have a disadvantage of being conceived as being very remote and fear and hope decrease in inverse ratio to the distance of their objects. Death is commonly considered as something that is far off, and therefore the retribution after death also appears distant and unreal and is comparatively little thought of by the people who believe in it.

Moreover, in the nineteenth century a considerable number of Christians began to feel shocked by the ancient doctrine of eternal punishment.

"Nowadays, according to Dr. Major, the general belief in the English church is that 'the soul at death passes into the spirit world and never again has anything to do with



its fleshly integument, which has been deposited in the grave'; and a conviction has grown up that heaven and hell are thought of not as localities but as personal states, and that there is every degree of purgatory between them. Dr. Inge does not think that in our time at any rate self-regarding motives, based on calculation of future happiness or misery, have much influence. For those who accept the views expressed in the recent Report of the Commissioners on Christian Doctrine appointed by the English Archbishops, that the essence of hell is merely exclusion from the fellowship of God, there cannot be much fear of it." #

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# Westermarck, Op. Cit., p. 407.

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Westermarck concludes that although acts which were originally prompted by hope or fear may leave behind habits for which there is no longer any motive, and although sincere devotion to a divine law-giver may lead to a perfectly unselfish desire to obey his will, religion is still not basic to morality.

W. T. Stace also sees no necessity for holding religion as basic to morality.

"It has been held that the obvious necessity for a standard outside pleasure, by which pleasure is to be judged, points to some criterion of judgment outside of experience altogether. We can only understand this mystery, we are told, in terms of the Absolute, only if we accept some such philosophy as that of absolute idealism. Or else - it has been asserted - we must introduce a teleological conception of the universe at large. The satisfactions of the spirit are higher because of the spiritual nature of the whole universe, because they forward the cosmic plan in which the movement towards



spirit, and away from matter, is the leading idea.

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"I do not assert that there is no cosmic plan. I only assert that I do not know whether there is or not, and that if there is I have no understanding whatever of what the plan may be. And I am certain that those who talk big about the Absolute and about teleology are as completely ignorant of the matter as I am. And for this reason, if for no other, it is futile to make either the cosmic plan or the Absolute the standard of higher and lower satisfactions. Nor is it necessary to attempt to do this. For the explanation of the riddle, I should say, lies under our noses in quite ordinary, empirical, and mundane considerations. It is capable of an entirely naturalistic solution. It is therefore unnecessary to seek for an explanation beyond the stars." #

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# W. T. Stace, The Concept of Morals, p. 154-5.

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Stace rejects both ethical absolutism and ethical relativity. He believes morality relative to the universal needs of human nature, but not relative to the particular needs of particular nations, ages or social groups. Morality to him is not absolute but is universal. He sets out to show that there is this universal morality which applies not merely to a race, or to an age, but to all humanity in all ages.

Stace first formulates a general law of morals which embodies the three concepts of happiness-production, altruism and justice.

"Act always so as to increase human happiness as much as possible. And at the



same time act on the principle that all persons, including yourself are intrinsically of equal value." #

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# Ibid., p. 180.

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From this law, Stace draws the conclusion that the essence of morality is unselfishness. Conversely, the essence of immorality is selfishness. Therefore any objection which anyone may urge against any course of action on any ground other than that it is selfish is not a moral objection. In other words, nothing can be morally wrong which does not cause, or tend to cause, injury (unhappiness or decrease of happiness) to a fellow being. Actions which do not cause happiness may often be objectionable. But they are not morally objectionable. They may contravene perfectly reasonable rules of conduct. But these cannot be moral rules. Essentially, morality is based on altruism.

Stace then proceeds to show the universality of morality as expressed in his law. He does not claim that all people, everywhere, have consciously accepted the morality of altruism in the form or in the words in which he has expressed it. He sees his principle as equivalent in meaning to the precept "Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you." He does not say that all the practices



which are approved in a particular social group are expressions of altruism. Neither does he say that the principle of altruism is found everywhere complete and fully developed. Altruism evolves in mankind from the primitive moral code of a savage society to the golden rule of Christianity.

"To sum up what has so far been said. There actually is a single universal morality which all humanity has recognized in the past and recognizes today. But this bold statement does not mean that men's moral ideas about particular duties or crimes are everywhere the same. ...What it does mean is that the principle of altruism, as formulated is the abstract statement of that which, whether as vague feeling or as conceptual idea is everywhere the moving spirit and the inner life of whatever morality exists. Here it is no more than a scarcely visible seed. There it is a full grown tree. Here it is dim and misty. There it shines out with the purity of a star. Here it is overlaid and encrusted with barbarities. There it is found nearly pure. Wherever there is morality at all, there, in that place, there is altruism in greater or less degree." #

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# Ibid., p. 243-4.

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Moral obligation arises out of two special parts in human nature, says Stace. The first is the social nature of man. The second - which is closely connected with the first, but not identical with it - is his capacity for being made happy in some degree by the bare fact of the happiness of other persons. Stace explains these two facts of human nature.



"This social nature of man is one of the two sources of moral obligation. It is the most primitive source and perhaps the most important. It is this which in the first instance forces morality upon us. For without society men cannot be happy, and they cannot have society except upon the basis of a greater or lesser degree of altruism. The only condition upon which men can live together is that they shall have regard to the needs, desires, and feelings of each other. Thus it is impossible for me to be happy unless I am prepared to act for the happiness of other men. And to say this is to say that morality, at least the rudiments of it, is a necessity for happiness. Why, then, should I be moral? Because I myself can only be happy if I am moral, that is, if I consult the happiness of my fellows." #

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# Ibid., pp. 266-7.

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"Thus this second universal fact of human nature is also one of the foundations of moral obligation. For it is an essential basis of altruism. It means that men cannot be happy unless they work for the happiness of others. Why should I be moral? This means, Why should I be unselfish? One reason has already been found in the fact of sociality. The other reason is now before us. That I am, willy nilly, made directly happy by the happiness of others, and unhappy by their unhappiness, means that I can only attain complete happiness for myself through unselfishness, through seeing others happy and making them happy. Work for the happiness of others is the most valuable source of my own happiness." #

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# Ibid., pp. 273-4.

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Moral obligations flows from these two sources, says Stace. The real road to happiness is the road of altruism, and this is true whether men recognize the fact or not.



Having now considered the arguments both for and against the claim that religion is basic to morality, what conclusions may we draw? It would seem that the arguments quoted conflict so strongly that no definite conclusion is possible. Inasmuch as men such as Niebuhr, Caird and Barnes can be challenged so strongly, we cannot accept as conclusive the claim that religion is basic to morality.

We shall now turn to a more specific aspect of the problem of religion and morals and examine the relation between religion and juvenile delinquency. The charge is often made that juvenile delinquency results from the omission of religious influences in the lives of children, and can be checked only by bringing religion back to the school. We have seen this claim frequently made by the proponents of religious education in their statements of aims and objectives. Are these claims sound?

No studies have been made to determine the success of religious education programs in attaining their objectives. The only objective statements concerning the relation of religious instruction to delinquency are to the effect that of the boys who appear in



Police Court, few have ever been members of a Sunday School.

However, there have been careful investigations into the relation of church membership to crime, and into the effects of instruction in religion upon delinquency, all of which bear upon our problem.

As long as 1917, criminologists stated that religion did not necessary reduce crime. In that year, Enrico Ferri said:

"History and criminal psychology bear witness that a corrupted religion foments criminality. ... Religion, even when it works for the common good and not for the profit of a caste, can offer only a transitory obstacle to crime." #

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# Enrico Ferri, Criminal Sociology, p. 271.

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His contemporary, Cesare Lombroso, professor of psychiatry and criminal anthropology at the University of Turin, wrote:

"It is time to free ourselves from the ativistic tendency which has survived unnoticed even in the most scientific observer, to regard religion as a universal panacea for crime...."

"We cannot ... find in religion, at least as it is understood in the Latin countries a remedy against crime." #

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# C. Lombroso, Crime, Its Causes and Remedies, pp. 292-3.

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Although these are statements of men working in the field of criminology, they must be regarded only as early opinions in this controversial field



of study.

Let us look at the problem of religion and crime in the light of more scientific data.

If religion were a deterrent to crime, one would expect to find few people in our penal institutions who acknowledge a religion. But such is not the case. From a study conducted by Franklin Steiner on the religious preferences of prison inmates, it was found that of 85,000 individuals eighty per cent expressed a preference for Christianity; only 8,000 indicated no preference at all, and a mere 150 identified themselves as either atheists or agnostics. #

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# Cf. V. T. Thayer, Religion in Public Education, p.110.

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Healy and Bronner studied 1636 delinquents who appeared before the Chicago Juvenile Court in 1910 and found that ninety per cent of them were of religious background, and less than one-tenth of one per cent definitely of no religion.# They concluded that

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# C. R. Moehlman, School and Church, The American Way, p. 127.

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"church affiliations very frequently were not potent in combatting stresses that make for the production of delinquency." #

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# M. Stopes, Letter, New Statesman and Nation, Vol.26, (Oct. 9, 1943), p. 233.

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Dr. Teeters, investigating the religious affiliations of inmates of twenty-seven penitentiaries and nineteen reform schools, found that 71.8 per cent of the inmates were affiliated with some religion, whereas only 46.6 per cent of the total population in the United States are members of religious bodies. #

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# V. T. Thayer, Op. Cit., pp. 109-10.

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Dr. George Mursall, of the Ohio Department of Welfare, from a comparison of a group of boys in the Ohio Reform School at Lancaster with law-abiding children outside, found that the inmates of the reformatory had received fully as much religious training as had non-offenders. He concluded from the evidence that "it seems safe to state that there is no significant relation between religious training and delinquent or non-delinquent behaviour." #

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# Ibid., p. 110.

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Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck made a study based on a careful investigation into the life histories of all (510) prisoners released from the Massachusetts Reformatory whose sentences expired in 1921 and 1922. Regarding the religion of these men, they state:

"Of the 460 men about whom this fact was known, 8.5 per cent attended church regularly every Sunday prior to their commitment to the



Reformatory, 88.5 per cent were irregular in attendance, 3 per cent were not church-goers. Of those who had attended irregularly, 50.5 per cent had been going to church within a year prior to their commitment." #

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# S. Glueck and E. T. Glueck, 500 Criminal Careers, p. 131.

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The following table illustrates the religious faith of the reformatory men as compared to the general Massachusetts population.

<u>Religion</u>	<u>Reformatory Group</u>	<u>General Population</u>	#
Protestant	28.6	25.2	
Catholic	66.3	66.4	
Hebrew	3.9	6.7	
Other	1.2	1.7	

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# Ibid., p. 132.

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While the Gluecks could find no basis for the claim that religion checks delinquency, they did bring up other interesting information. Of the members of the group which was studied, sixty per cent came from homes where one parent was dead, and twenty-five per cent from homes where the parents had been separated, divorced, or had deserted. Educationally, forty-five per cent had never got beyond the fifth grade in school, and ninety per cent did not get beyond grade



eight. Only one fifth of one per cent completed high school. #

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# Ibid., pp. 116, 132.

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Luba comments thus on the situation:

"To the picture of the failure of a great Christian country to educate its citizens, let this damning trait be added: 84 per cent of these unfortunates came from broken homes; the parents were dead, or separated or in the institutions." #

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# J. H. Luba, God or Man, pp. 302-3.

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Professor Highblower, of the University of Iowa, tested 3316 children for lying, cheating and deception. #

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# S. L. Pressey, J. E. Janney, R. G. Kuhlen, Life: A Psychological Survey, p. 421.

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From a study of the results he concluded that:

"There appears to be no relationship of any consequence between Biblical information and the different phases of conduct studied. ... It indicates very definitely that mere knowledge of the Bible is not in itself sufficient to insure character growth." #

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# V. T. Thayer, Op. Cit., p. 111.

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In all the above studies, we find no evidence to support the claim that religion is effective in checking delinquency.

Let us now turn more specifically to the problem



of religious instruction of children. Probably the most extensive study of this nature was the one conducted by Hartshorne and May, and published in a three-volume work under the general title: Studies in the Nature of Character. The investigators found from an extensive survey of the actions of children under stress that those who attended Sunday Schools acted no better than did children of a similar background who lacked religious instruction.

"Indeed the authors conclude that 'apparently the tendency to deceive is about as prevalent among those enrolled in Sunday Schools as it is among those who are not.'" #

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# Ibid., p. 110.

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The point is that children are not necessarily moral because they go to Sunday School, but they go to Sunday School because they are moral, - that is, because the influences of the home and of the parents which result in their going to Sunday School are also conducive to good moral development.

"In the matter of honesty, cooperation, inhibition, and persistence, we find a general tendency for children enrolled in Sunday Schools to exhibit more desirable conduct than the children who are not enrolled in Sunday Schools. But, on the other hand, we find (and this is especially true of honesty) that there is practically no correlation between frequency of attendance at Sunday School and conduct. Apparently it is only necessary to be enrolled. It is clear that we have here an excellent



illustration of selection. It is the better trained children who are enrolled in the Sunday Schools in the first place. Furthermore, it is not expected that the Sunday School, having the children for one out of one hundred waking hours, could do very much in the way of establishing habits of conduct." #

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# H. Hartshorne, Character in Human Relations, pp. 224-5.

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Hartshorne and May conclude that no one is honest or dishonest by nature. Where conflict arises between a child and his environment, deception is a natural mode of adjustment. If indirect ways of gaining his end are successful, they will be continued unless direct training is undertaken through which direct and honest methods may also be successful. The main attention of educators should be placed not so much in devices for teaching honesty or any other trait, as on the reconstruction of school practices in such a way as to provide, not occasional, but constant and regular opportunities for the successful use by both teachers and pupils of such forms of conduct as make for the common good. #

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# H. Hartshorne and M. A. May, Studies in Deceit, pp. 412-14.

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Mere talking about morality without creating opportunities for moral development will not promote moral growth. This is the basic implication that



pervades the conclusions drawn from the studies of Hartshorne and May. They restate it in their Studies in Service and Self-Control.

"If standards and ideals, whether already in the possession of the group or not, are to function as controlling factors, they must become a part of the situation to which the child responds and assist in the achievement of satisfactory modes of adjustment to those aspects of the situation which are independent of these standards and ideals - they must be tools rather than objects of aesthetic appreciation." #

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# H. Hartshorne, M. A. May, J. B. Maller, Studies in Service and Self-Control, p. 454.

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Hartshorne and May summarize what they consider to be the basic facts which underlie any attempt at moral development:

- (1) What must be learned must be experienced.
- (2) What must be experienced must be represented in the situation to which the children are exposed.
- (3) If what is to be learned is some form of conduct or mode of adjustment, then the situations to which the children are exposed must be opportunities to pursue interests which lead to the conduct to be learned.
- (4) This conduct must be carried on in relation to the particular situations to which it



is the preferred mode of response. #

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Ibid., p. 454.

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In other words, the moral response can only be learned in the moral situation for which it is the accepted response, and not from mere discussion of morality.

It seems that such principles were recognized by the members of the Royal Commission appointed to investigate the penal system of Canada. In a section of their Report, which discusses religious services and chaplains, they say:

"It appears to your commissioners that it has been regarded officially that a chaplain is performing his duties satisfactorily so long as he can show that he has been holding the required religious services and going through the form of his pastoral functions, albeit with a minimum of inconvenience to himself. In the opinion of your commissioners, the mere holding of religious services, important as this is, when without diligent and constant personal service, is of little avail in accomplishing any measure of reformation.

"It is essential that the chaplain should gain and hold the confidence of the prisoners. Experienced prison officers are unanimously of the opinion that there are few prisoners who are without some good in them. The task of the chaplain is to find that good and develop it, and the task cannot be accomplished merely by the preaching of sermons. It may be accomplished by rendering small personal kindnesses (e.g., communicating with the prisoner's wife and children) or by assisting the prisoner through personal contact, to find employment on release, or even by advice and encouragement during his incarceration. Works, not words, make a good prison chaplain.

"While the regular instruction must be a part of the chaplain's duty, it will be very



unfortunate if the lad [the prisoner] comes to associate the profession of religion with the clergy alone. Officers [of the prison] of every rank ought to be encouraged to take an actual part in the services. The fact that they have faith and live in accordance with their faith may have more influence with the lad than anything else. He does not find it easy to believe what he is told, or what he reads, but he will believe what he sees." #

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# Report of the Royal Commission to Investigate the Penal System of Canada, 1938. pp. 123-4.

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Now what are we to draw from these data? What implications have these studies for our problem concerning the relation between religious education and juvenile delinquency? Three conclusions seem indicated. First, on the basis of the studies of the church affiliation of prisoners and delinquents, it does not seem that these affiliations were potent in combatting the stresses which make for the production of delinquency. Secondly, contact with religious information, or exposure to moral instruction will not in itself produce moral behavior. Thirdly, moral behavior arises out of moral situations - if we would promote moral growth in our youth we must provide opportunities for developing this socially desirable behavior. As religious education as it is proposed would consist mainly of the transmission of religious and Biblical knowledge, it is unlikely that such instruction would develop a morality which



would counteract delinquent behavior. Neither does it seem that sectarian religion is effective in stemming delinquency. It appears, therefore, that the claim that sectarian religious education in the schools will check delinquency cannot be accepted.

One more objective of religious education is left for our consideration. It is a worldly one which we have seen was implied more than stated, and which aims through sectarian religious instruction at acquainting children with the church, in the hope of increasing church membership. Such an attitude is dangerous to the school.

The objectives of the school are meant to transcend the narrow aims of the individual or sect. Our schools were conceived to provide for all children. The rich, the poor, the strong and the infirm, children with strange pronunciations and varying customs, black, white, yellow, red - descendants of many races, expressing various creeds and professing many religions, find equality and opportunity in the school. Here they learn that one's accent, one's color, one's religion, do not set him apart from his fellows. The school attempts to provide a broad basis of knowledge, and to foster a critical yet sympathetic and broadminded attitude, by which the individual can search out the truth for himself. It does not try



to turn out members of one craft, or one profession, or one political creed or of one religious sect. Its functions must be broader. The aim of the school is to find common ground for all to live together and not to emphasize the differences of race or of religion which are basic to much of the bigotry and intolerance which so often characterize our adult society.

We have now examined the basic aims and objectives of religious education in the public school as they are set forth by its advocates. On the basis of our study we have found that religion cannot conclusively be accepted as a basis for morality. The argument that religion forms such a basis cannot therefore be accepted as a reason for introducing religious education into the schools. Similarly, the claims that religious education will underwrite democracy and check delinquency cannot be substantiated. Consequently, we must conclude that there is no justification for introducing sectarian religious education into the public schools on the grounds advocated.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### IS RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PRACTICABLE?

In the preceding chapter, the theories behind religious education were examined and found invalid. Do the practical results of programs of religious education now in operation substantiate or refute these findings? It is the purpose of this chapter to examine the methods which are suggested for attaining the objectives of the champions of religious education, to determine the practicability of such methods and the extent to which they have achieved, or show promise of achieving, the results for which they were designed.

The schemes for religious education now in effect in Great Britain, the United States and Canada fall into four groups, each with many minor variations. They are:

- (1) Released time programs.
- (2) Dismissed time programs.
- (3) Combined syllabuses, in or out of the curriculum.
- (4) Religion as a part of the curriculum.

These plans will be dealt with singly, in the order given.



Because there is little likelihood of any valid empirical evidence being obtained on the problem, we must assess the various approaches to religious education on the basis of their obvious advantages and disadvantages. The development of closer harmony among pupils, the growth of tolerance, and other desirable results or their opposites are factors to be considered. The previous chapter pointed out that there is no measurable difference in behavior traits between those who obtain religious instruction regularly in Sunday school and those who do not. Religious instruction given in the public school may have different results. Simply because the administration of a program of religious education is a difficult problem, the plan should not be discarded. If a program produces the desired results, a method can be found to implement it.

The fundamental principles upon which our public school system is based are democratic ideals including tolerance, unity, non-discrimination, equality of opportunity and freedom of religion. Keeping these basic principles in mind, let us examine the four types of program already mentioned.

'Released time' programs essentially require the devotion of part of the school day to religious instruction, to be given in the school buildings. Ministers, priests, rabbis and other religious leaders



are permitted to meet with children of their faith for the purpose of giving them sectarian religious instruction. This arrangement raises obvious problems. Is the dividing of children into groups on the basis of religious beliefs likely to promote unity or tolerance? Are children usually aware of religious differences until they are taught that awareness? Are pupils who are unable to accept any of the various faiths taught being discriminated against? Have they equality of opportunity in spirit as well as in letter? These questions must be satisfactorily answered before a released time plan for Alberta can be endorsed.

The released time plan was the most common type of religious education program in the United States until the early months of 1948, when the Supreme Court's decision on the McCollum Case# ruled such

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# Supreme Court of the United States Bulletin No. 90, October Term, 1948. "People of the State of Illinois ex rel. Vashti McCollum, Appellant v. Board of Education of School District #71, Champaign County, Illinois et al. Appeal from Supreme Court of Illinois." (March 8, 1948).

Cf. Ante, p. 57.

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programs unconstitutional. Although very little has been possible in evaluation of the positive effects produced in students attending released time classes, much has been written concerning the negative aspects



of such programs. V. E. Herrick # makes the following

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# V. E. Herrick, "Religion in the Public Schools of America", Elementary School Journal, Vol. XLVI, (November, 1945), p. 119.

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summary of the disadvantages of the released time systems in Chicago and New York, when he summarizes an article in Nation's Schools by E. H. Wilson:

"The programs: (1) are administratively a nuisance; (2) deprive the pupil of time needed for his regular school program; (3) introduce a divisive religious identification into our melting pot; (4) actually and practically work to the detriment of the smaller sects and of secular pupils; (5) bring discredit on religion because of its utilization of the coercive authority of the state over the child, and are but an opening wedge for further inroads of sectarianism."

Later in the same article Herrick points out the arguments in favor of released time programs, as given in a 1943 report of the New York Public Education Association. Improvement in cooperation between schools and religious institutions in the community, betterment of understanding of mutual problems by lay and religious leaders, and the creation of an awareness in children of religious values, God, and the Bible, were given by the report as inherent benefits accruing from released time programs. It is interesting to note that the first two of these points have no direct relation to the pupils, around whose education and intellectual betterment our educational



system is supposedly built. An 'awareness' of 'religious values, God, and the Bible' does not seem to constitute sufficient reason for instituting a released time program if that program carries with it the disadvantages already mentioned.

An editorial in Christian Century # gives a

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# "Religion in the Public Schools", Christian Century, (March 19, 1941), pp. 384-85.

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broad view of the released time approach to religious education. This article argues that such systems are not properly integrated in the school system and therefore cannot produce integrated personalities in children. Such systems do not command unanimous approval from the public and are the cause of bickering and animosity. Gains of most of such systems are short-term ones. The losses may be long term, such as an accentuation of religious differences, a reduction of the churches' sense of responsibility, and an increase in the pressure of religious groups on schools. W. C. Bower # writing

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# W. C. Bower, "Religion on Released-Time", Christian Century, (August 6, 1941), pp. 980-81.

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in the same magazines, comes to similar conclusions. Very few writers acclaim released time programs as an outstanding success. Moehlman #, in a recent book in

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# C. H. Moehlman, The Church as Educator, pp. 104-28.

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which he endeavors to show how the American way of life is antithetical to any program of a released time nature, gives fifteen reasons why such programs are valueless. Each of these points was phrased as a question for which Moehlman sought answers from arguments and experiences of others. The answers he found have been paraphrased below.

- (1) Student reaction to released time has not been very favorable.
- (2) Released time is a disintegrating force in the classroom and on the campus.
- (3) Released time is viewed by the average American as a confession of weakness and failure on the part of the churches.
- (4) Released time points out the conflict within Protestantism between religious education and the Sunday school.
- (5) Examinations of released time experiments predict future schism among its promoters. Sectarians want it to perpetuate dogma. Liberal leaders want it to further understanding and appreciation. It cannot do both.
- (6) Ministers, who are seldom qualified teachers, can seldom teach the whole program. Teachers, on whom the burden falls, are seldom qualified to teach religion.



- (7) The released time programs do not promote Protestant unity.
- (8) Released time does not promote Catholic-Protestant understanding.
- (9) Teachers are not in favor of released time.
- (10) The granting of credit for released time courses conflicts with public school standards.
- (Points 11 & 12 deal with the relation between released time and American law, and are irrelevant here).
- (13) Church interest in released time is declining.
- (14) The released time experiment is not adequate to the religious needs of our time.
- (15) Released time is promoting the disintegration of public educational programs which provide the only valid general approach to religion in the American way of life.

While Moehlman's thesis is one with which we are not directly concerned here, his arguments are conclusive when taken in context. Other writers concur with many of his main points. Agnes E. Meyer, # in examining the

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# A. E. Meyer, "The Public School and Sectarian Religion", Liberty, Vol. XLIII, (Second Quarter, 1948), pp. 9-13.

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situation, finds many of the same arguments against released time and supports them as competently as Moehlman. Again, some of the arguments do not affect



the pupils directly and, perhaps, could be ruled irrelevant on that ground.

Thayer quotes a statement by the Reverend Phillip Schug #, a minister of Champaign, Illinois, who "was

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# V. T. Thayer, Religion in Public Education, p. 126-27.

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so moved by the effects of religious segregation upon the children that he advised one parent, a Mrs. V. McCollum, to challenge the legality of sectarian teaching in tax-supported schools during school hours." Rev. Mr. Schug says, in part:

"I can sympathize with the frustrations experienced by religious people who have seen their world split asunder. But I do not agree that the solution - taking over public school classes, dividing the children into two, three, four or more different groups, and instructing them separately in varying religious philosophies is a wise solution. Many problems arise. To illustrate, the problem of the direct teaching from divisions into different groups is a most serious one. Religious instruction is the only instruction for which children must be so divided. The public school is a great agent for democracy in that rich and poor, Jew and Gentile, and all social classes unite for common activity. It breaks down divisions, but when sectarian religious instruction is added it automatically teaches division and becomes an active agent in creating frictions.

"Indeed, it was just this which brought Mrs. McCollum to me. Her boy, Terry, was ostracized and ridiculed by his classmates because he did not take religious instruction. For a child there is probably no punishment more severe or more serious than being shunned and ridiculed by his fellows. Yet it is inevitable that such things will happen when sectarian teachers take a natural group and divide the sheep from the goats and then subdivide the sheep for instruction in conflicting philosophies. Such a program of



education, in my estimation, is basically unsound and destructive of the finer values regardless of the high hopes and good intentions of the instructors."

A lawyer acting as corporation counsel for the city of Buffalo reinforces Schug's statements:

"Some of the more stupid teachers lined up against different walls of their classrooms the children of the various faiths, in order to classify them. And so these little ones stared across the room at each other - the Catholics at the Protestants, the latter at the former and both at the Jews. These children, for the first time in their short lives, were made conscious of alleged differences among themselves. The results have been the expected ones.

"The administrative problems which have arisen are legion, the irritations numerous." #

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# Ibid., p. 128.

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Speaking of the operation of released time programs in fifty-seven California cities after having made two surveys of the situation, the Public Education Society of San Francisco has the following to say:

"The plan is a failure in California's Public Schools measured by any conceivable yardstick." #

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# Ibid., p. 132.

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In Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, a released time program was given a trial for three years. It was found by the board that the program "neither met the needs of religious education or justified the effect



upon the public school system",# and the plan was

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# A. W. Johnson and F. H. Yost, Separation of Church and State, p. 82.

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abandoned. Similarly, in Baltimore, Maryland, the results of a released time program did not seem to warrant its continuation and it was abandoned also. In San Diego, California, after a year's trial of a released time program, the Board of Education decided that "the results did not justify a continuation or extension of the plan." #

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# Ibid., p. 84.

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That some sort of religion should be taught is generally accepted. That it should be sectarian, as provided for in released time programs, seems doubtful. "If religion is theology, and doctrine, and creeds made over disputed definitions of God and theories of man's destiny, it cannot be taught in our schools. But if religion is love to God and man, it can be taught anywhere and it ought to be taught in our schools. If it is not taught, our whole educational pyramid will continue to wobble on its pinnacle instead of resting firmly on its base." #

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# C. M. Sheldon, "Can Religion be Taught?", Atlantic Monthly, (October, 1925), p. 472.

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In view of the dearth of sound benefits attributable to released time programs, it does not seem unfair to consider these programs impracticable and undesirable. The situation in Alberta will be examined in the next chapter to determine whether or not the foregoing conclusions are applicable in this Province.

Since the Supreme Court of the United States ruled released time programs unconstitutional in its decision on the McCollum Case # in March, 1948, the

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# Cf., p. 57.

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'dismissed time' type of religious education program has increased in popularity. In this sort of program, the pupils are simply dismissed early one day per week, with no check made by the school as to where the children spend the hour. The onus is on the parents, the church and the pupils themselves to see that it is not wasted. The church will conceivably use its influence to draw the students to classes in religious education. What parents and children do remains to be seen. The system has more obvious advantages than the released time plan. Divisiveness among the students is not accentuated, for they are not split into groups for instruction but simply go



individually to the church of their choice. The school is not burdened with administrative duties such as arise from many released time programs. Children who do not wish to participate in the religious instruction do not create a problem for they are dismissed with the others and can spend the time as they or their parents wish. As the school is not connected with the instruction in any way, the cry that public funds are being used to further particular sects cannot be raised.

As this type of plan has only recently come into prominence, books and articles containing evaluations of it are still lacking. Because the legislation of the Province of Alberta permits religious teaching in the school building, dismissed time programs have not received attention here. At the present time, they seem the most acceptable method for the giving of religious instruction to school children of the United States. The same is not true of Alberta, for, although the plan does not carry with it many of the disadvantages of the released time plan, it does have one demerit. If the school is to give some of its already crowded schedule to the church, it may reasonably ask that such time be used to advantage. Unless future events in the United States show that such plans are producing good results in a high percentage of the



pupils involved, similar programs cannot be justifiably advocated for Alberta. As mentioned in the previous chapter, studies have shown that there is no significant difference between children who attend Sunday school regularly and those who do not. # If a

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# Cf. , p.

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program for religious education on a dismissed time basis did succeed in enrolling a high percentage of the student body, there would still be no guarantee that the desired results would be achieved. When one considers the irresponsibility of some children when left to their own pursuits, and the attitude of many parents towards religion today, the success of a system of religious education on dismissed time would seem doubtful.

'Agreed' or 'combined' syllabuses derive their name from having been agreed upon by several Christian sects as suitable programs for public school children. Sometimes they are taught by church leaders, but more often by the teacher. The agreed syllabus approach to the problem of religious education has had its major growth in Britain, but plans of a similar nature are becoming more numerous in Canada. In Britain, because relatively few sects constitute the population in any one attendance area (making



for ease of agreement or compromise) the system has encountered a minimum of difficulty. In Ontario, where most districts have a heterogeneous population, the situation is more complex.

There has been very little written concerning the success of agreed syllabuses, perhaps because such ventures are relatively new in the field of religious education. Perhaps, too, most people realize that in any program of religious instruction "the test of the whole enterprise is not whether the juniors can recite the list of the minor prophets, but whether, when they are forty, they will be friendly, co-operative, intelligent, unquarrelsome Christian men and women." # Again, it must be stressed that

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# "Survey of Religious Education", Christian Century, Vol. 40, (Dec. 6, 1923), pp. 1573-4.

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empirical evidence as to the relative success or failure of a program of religious education is virtually impossible to obtain. We must again turn to the arguments and experiences of others. I. L. Kandel, in a short review of the report issued by the American Council on Education's Committee on Religion and Education, # states that the Committee did not believe

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# "Religion and Public Education", School and Society, Vol. LXVI, (July 26, 1947), p. 53.

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that the combined syllabus was a practical solution to the problem of religious education. The strong feeling of sectarianism between most faiths would render such a plan unworkable. Any 'watered-down' version of religious beliefs would be unacceptable to those people who really hold to one faith. Others#

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# E. N. Mozley, Spectator, Vol. 170, (Nov. 27, 1942), p. 655.

E. A. Fitzpatrick, "Religion in Public Education", American School Board Journal, Vol. 115, (July, 1947), p. 31.

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have pointed out that combined or agreed syllabuses offer only 'dry bones'. A 'living faith, not dogma', is what is needed, and such a faith cannot come from a combined syllabus.

A. V. Murray # points out common failures in the

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# A. V. Murray, "Syllabus Religion", Spectator, (January 31, 1947), pp. 137-38.

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syllabus type of program. Many of the syllabuses, according to Murray, contain too much material to be taught properly, and are not compiled through experience but through administrative accidents such as the personnel available in a particular area. Such failings, if they exist, could easily be overcome, should agreed syllabus programs produce the results desired.



Other writers # have made more favorable comments

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# Cf. "Churches and Education", Spectator, (Oct. 29, 1943), p. 398.

Cf. W. B. Selbie, "Theological Colleges and Religious Education", Hibbert Journal, (July 1942), pp. 311-19.

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on the syllabus system. It has been pointed out that much of the controversy about religion in the schools has died out since syllabuses became popular, that improvement in the qualifications of teachers will make the plan even better, and that all local authorities should adopt one of the many excellent syllabuses.

In a letter to the authors, the Managing Editor of the Ontario School Argus has the following to say of the syllabus system adopted by the Ontario Department of Education: # "I have watched carefully the working

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# J. D. Mills, in a letter to the authors, now on file.

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out of the system in Ontario and have no hesitation whatever in saying that the country is much the better for it. In our own community we have carefully checked the type of instruction being given by Anglican, Baptist, United Church and ministers of other denominations, and never once have we found any of them allowing the slightest sectarian bias to creep in. As a matter of fact, not one single complaint



has come to the Department on this score from any part of the province."

The situation is not as rosy as might appear from this letter, however. In a brief submitted to the Royal Commission on Education by the Central Division of the Canadian Jewish Congress#, the

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# "Religious Education in Ontario Schools", Canadian Jewish Congress, Central Division's Brief to Royal Commission on Education, (Sept. 15, 1945), Brief No. 46.

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following observations were made:

"All faiths professed by citizens of Canada should be on an equal footing before the law. Whatever may be the view of the majority of the people concerning religious belief, that majority endangers the principle of equality when it utilized the resources of the State to propagate its own view of religion, and, at the same time, approaches perilously close to the totalitarian system.

"To speak of religious education in the public schools of Ontario as Christian and undenominational at one and the same time is self-contradictory, for not only do Canadians of Jewish and other non-Christian faiths refuse to accept such teaching for their children, but some Christian denominations, Protestant and non-Protestant alike, cannot conscientiously permit their children to receive such teaching. In fact, a number have already recorded their protest.

"The course in Religious Education introduced into the public schools of Ontario ... merely adds to the fifty-seven different creeds or denominations already reported by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, a fifty-eighth denomination or creed, with its own dogma, and perhaps eventually its own name.

"In the Education Act of Great Britain passed in 1870, when Mr. Cowper-Temple was Minister of the Board of Education, an attempt was made to



draft a 'non-sectarian' clause covering the religious education in State-provided schools, a clause which did not win the approval either of the Anglican or Non-Conformist Churches. Designed to eliminate sectarianism, it actually resulted in developing an additional sect, for, among the generations of children who grew up under the teaching of the so-called 'Cowper-Temple' clause, many afterwards described themselves as 'Cowper-Temple-ists' when asked their religious denomination.

"It has been well said that few divisive influences in human society cut deeper and entail greater rancour than differences in religious belief. The public school is, and should be, our greatest unifying influence. It is the function and the glory of our public school that it is the most successful instrument yet devised for preparing people of every sect and of no sect, people of every grade and people of the most diverse nationalities, for progressive citizenship in our democracy. The obvious attention to religious differences, which religious education in the public schools will promote, cannot fail to fan the flames of intolerance in every community where a religious minority exists. The more sensitive parents are to the facts of child development, the more serious will their problem become.

"The provision that pupils may be excused from the classroom during religious instruction, upon written request of the parent, does not prevent or correct injustice. It subjects the children of a small minority to the embarrassment of excluding themselves from a school exercise in which others are called upon to share. The excluded child may become the object of reproach and suspicion. Such a course tends to destroy that equality of pupils which democratic law seeks to maintain and protect. Some parents, rather than expose their children to the embarrassment of segregation from their fellow pupils, may yield in silence.

"The continuation of such instruction will weaken the unifying bond of Canadianism and accentuate the divisive influence of credal friction."

In an appendix to the brief quoted above, some of the points on which the Jewish Congress disagreed with



the teachings of the religious education program of Ontario were recorded. # The Guide-books which are

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# "Statement on the Presentation of the Jewish Religion in the Textbooks for Religious Education of the Ontario Public Schools", Brief 46, App. 1

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provided to facilitate the instruction of the course were the main target of attack. Arguments, based on contemporary literature on Biblical matters, were presented under the following headings:

"According to the Guides, Jesus' teaching was entirely novel and superior to Jewish religion." (The argument that it was not is based upon work of leading contemporary Christian theologians.)

"The Guides construct an imaginary 'Jewish Religion' of the time, and set Christianity in anti-thesis to this 'inferior' religion, - in spite of the warnings of G. F. Moore (Judaism, 3 vols., Cambridge, 1927), and many others." (Examples of such misrepresentation are given from the Guides.)

"The Guides criticize Jewish beliefs without mentioning that the very same beliefs were fundamental in the teachings of Jesus and the Church." (Examples are again given.)

The Congress did not present its arguments without proof, but, to an ordinary reader, proved them beyond doubt.

An editorial in the Canadian Forum # agrees with

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# "Religious Education in Ontario", Canadian Forum, Vol. XXIV, No. 287, (Dec. 1944), p. 197.

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the above remarks. The following is an excerpt:



"The manual is exclusively Christian. It is not just Bible stories but doctrine. Nor does it teach the fundamental agreement of all religions on ethical conduct and the brotherhood of man. No child of Jewish or unorthodox Christian parents could possibly participate in these classes if the teacher follows her manual.

"To be isolated from one's group, not to belong, to walk from the room alone when everybody else stays behind, to be jeered at in the school yard or on the way home... - can a child suffer much worse? Any reputable psychologist knows that a sense of security, of 'belonging', is quite as essential as good food to a child's mental and physical health."

Although the agreed syllabus system may encounter a minimum of difficulty in some areas where the population is composed largely of one sect or of sects which can easily reach an agreement, in districts where the number and type of creeds is large, difficulties increase proportionately. Considering the foregoing arguments from the standpoint of both weight and quality, it would appear that the Ontario agreed syllabus system is not entirely satisfactory.

Let us examine some comments on programs which include religion in the curriculum of the school. In four provinces of Canada, separate schools are permitted to make religion an integral part of the general program. These cannot be considered public schools, which are our main interest. However, concerning the results of the religious education of the separate schools, statistics from juvenile courts present an unfavorable picture of these institutions, showing



almost twice as many separate school children as public school children among delinquents. # How much reliability

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# M. C. Stopes, "Religion in State Schools", New Statesman and Nation, (Sept. 25, 1943), p. 202.

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can be placed on these figures is questionable, but since no statistics have been shown to prove them wrong, it is unlikely that they have been distorted to such an extent that the opposite is true. The admittedly poorer separate school plants are less likely on the whole to turn out better products. The argument that separate school supporters are forced to live in the poorer sections of towns has been advanced to explain the high incidence of separate school children in juvenile courts. It is still unlikely that the environment of these children constitutes such a disadvantage that the school's work in developing good moral character is entirely negated, but any success in such training has not been statistically proven.

In an independent school in Elizabeth, New Jersey, a program of religion was instituted with the intention of giving the boys "an anchor to windward, a faith to live by", # the necessity of which was made evident

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# E. L. Springer, "Religion in the Independent School", Atlantic Monthly, Vol. 182, No. 6, (December 1948), pp. 57-60.

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when the draft began taking young lads of eighteen



directly out of school and putting them into the armed forces. On the success of the program, which was entirely undenominational and non-evangelistic, Springer has the following comments: #

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# Ibid., p. 60.

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"The program has become an outstanding success through the cooperation of many persons. ... The faculty as a whole have taken a real interest and, in daily contact with the boys, carry out the purposes and ideals of these studies in practical application throughout the school.

"The great majority of the seniors stated that Pingry the[school in question] had been much more influential than the church or the home in forming their religious outlook, and the large majority stated that their faith or interest in religion had been increased by the work done in Pingry. Not one reported that his faith had been weakened. There was a call for greater emphasis on religion all along the line in school, both in the courses and in chapel exercises."

That the system is successful in raising moral standards of the boys and in making them better citizens has not been proven, but from the enthusiastic acceptance of the plan by the pupils, the teachers and the parents, it would seem to have had a most auspicious beginning.

Religion in the curriculum seems to have been the most successful of any type of religious education, - meaning by religion 'teaching about religion', not the inculcation of any particular creed or dogma. Not only does it generally receive approval by parents, but, if it is broad enough and completely non-sectarian,



it is accepted by those people who do not hold to any religious creed. #

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# Cf. A. L. Moore, F. R. Edwards, "The Project Type of Teaching", Religious Education, Vol. XX, (April 1925), pp. 112-20.

Cf. F. E. Johnson, "Place of Religion in Public Education", Education, Vol. LXIV, (May 1944), pp. 521-23.

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British Columbia, in 1942, introduced a modified plan of curricular religious education when it permitted high school students to take elective courses in Bible study for credit. The courses were based on an agreed syllabus and were given off school premises, usually in churches. Glazier # has the following to

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# K. M. Glazier, "Teaching Religion in The Public Schools of Canada; Some Recent Developments", Religious Education, Vol. XXXVII, No. 6, (Nov. - Dec. 1942), p. 354.

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say of the experiment:

"The experiment, however, has been far from successful, according to reports from various ministers and authorities in British Columbia. A number of reasons have been given for its failure: the plan was launched without adequate build-up and without proper planning, it was introduced too late for students to rearrange their programs to include it, it was extra-mural and scheduled at inconvenient times, and it was met with indifference by some of the teachers. While it is true that not many students enrolled in the courses, yet the Province is to be commended for taking a step forward. An excellent course of study, based on the Cambridgeshire syllabus has been worked out, and with proper planning it is quite possible that something may still be made of the project."



In British Columbia, as in Ontario, the question of what is to be done arises concerning pupils who wish to take the course and yet cannot accept the agreed syllabus. Can they be said to have equality of opportunity? Can a syllabus based on a few religious creeds teach tolerance? Will such a course as just outlined be approached with eagerness as being interesting and valuable, or will it simply be an easy method of obtaining high school credits? Will an elective course in religion, based on an agreed syllabus, make students tolerant and sympathetic individuals or will it develop a snobbish clique that despises all students beyond its ranks? Can one or two years in any period-per-week course be expected to meet the needs of religious education as its proponents see them?

Unless a system of religious education shows promises of achieving long-range benefits, and unless it is acceptable to the people as a whole, it cannot be justifiably advocated for the public schools. It would appear that a program of public school religious instruction that is in any way limited by sectarianism is destined for failure in a country whose population is as heterogeneous as that of Canada. We cannot unconditionally reject all of the four examined schemes, however, until we have determined that



conditions in Alberta are basically the same as in the areas in which each of the systems has been operative.

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## CHAPTER IX

### IS RELIGIOUS EDUCATION DESIRABLE IN ALBERTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

In an earlier chapter the present status of religious education in Alberta was examined. It was found that various groups and individuals in the province were advocating public school religious education. The programs they suggested were as various as the results they hoped to achieve. In a previous chapter, several aims and objectives were examined and found invalid. If the various objectives which the Alberta pressure groups hope to attain are the same, they must be considered invalid also. These aims and objectives have already been stated in Chapter VI, but they are repeated here for convenience.

'We hope that ... the child may have a Faith which he can practice, not only as a child, but also as an adult citizen - ... love of God and neighbour, honesty, purity, temperance, respect for authority, and appreciation of the wonders of God-created nature ... . On the realization of this hope amongst school children in general one would expect to see: a reduction in crime rate, divorce and juvenile delinquency; more good-will and co-operation amongst men and nations.'

'... give an understanding of Christianity, its teaching and history.'

'... give the individual something to "tie to" in time of difficulty.'

'... religious instruction in the schools is most important, especially in these times when atheism and communism are so active.'



'... education in the teachings of the Bible.'

'... bring religion into the atmosphere of the school and the world ... .'

'... children must be taught a definite faith.'

'Teachers ... tell us there is a marked difference for good (morally) in those who receive religious instruction ... . Many children have come to a personal trust in Christ as their Saviour ... .'

'... children will understand that the Bible is a record of facts rather than a story book.'

'... improve moral and social living; acquaint the children with the Bible and its teachings and principles.'

'... such things as divorce, ... cheating, ... and animosity ..., are bound to decrease.'

'... divorce, juvenile delinquency, lack of church attendance show the need for religious education.'

'... basis later for decisions as to conduct, etc.'

'Christianity is the cure for all social ills ... .'

'... give children a broader view of religion and qualify them to think for themselves.'

'... provide the pupil with an idea of right and wrong as applied to everyday conduct, without which many young lives are going on the rocks.'

'... the practice of Christian Charity towards all men.'

'... children learn Bible stories, characters, history, (and) ... feel free to discuss stories ... without a feeling of shyness.'

'... tend to make young people more religious-conscious.'

'... students should recognize virtues and vices. Make them honest, charitable ..., morally upright ... .'

'Can we have ethics or morals without a religious concept? There is a common Spiritual heritage to be passed on ... .'



'An understanding of our way of life today demands a knowledge of Christian principles and beliefs.'

'... higher standards of conduct and happier lives ... achieved in the adult world.'

'... our greatest weapon against enemy propaganda in our social setup.'

'... give a basis for our literary culture. ... present an ideal of conduct, or morals ... .'

'... usefulness in bringing a fuller life to the children ... .'

'Some children ... never have the opportunity of getting religious instruction.'

These various objectives can be roughly classified under five headings:

- (1) The creation in children of an awareness of religion.
- (2) The giving to children of a definite faith.
- (3) The underwriting of democracy.
- (4) The provision of a basis for morality.
- (5) The reduction of juvenile delinquency.

Those objectives which fall into the first two categories, 'making children aware of religion' and 'giving children a definite faith', cannot be termed invalid, for it is quite conceivable that they might be attained through a program of religious education. The place that the teaching of a definite faith has in a public school system, and the part the school should play in creating an awareness of religion, are dealt with in the final chapter of this thesis.



In Chapter VII, it was found that religious education cannot hope to attain the objectives which fall under the last three of the above headings. It was found that religion does not necessarily underwrite democracy, that it has not been proven basic to morality, and that it has very little connection with juvenile delinquency. Therefore, on the basis of this previous analysis, we must consider the last three aims listed above as invalid, and inconclusive as arguments for the institution of a program of religious education in Alberta. does not always

Are the four types of religious education program (released time, dismissed time, agreed syllabuses and religion in the curriculum) practical in Alberta even though they are impractical in other places? Let us examine the variables which might make Alberta unique as far as these systems are concerned.

The legislation of the province provides for religious instruction in the public schools. # The

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# Cf. Ante, p. 10, 11.

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last half hour of the school day may be used for such religious instruction as permitted or desired by the board. However, in rejecting the four common types of religious education, the authors did not base any of their arguments on the laws of the areas



in question. In fact, any arguments so based were rejected. # The fact that Alberta permits religious

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# Cf. Chapter VIII, p.

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education by law does not in any way affect the impracticability of the four types of program.

In Alberta's government, its area and its geographical make-up there is nothing which makes the province unique insofar as religious education is concerned. The four systems common today do not appear to be cast in a more favorable light by any of these three factors.

Finally, let us examine the population of Alberta. If the people of the province are largely of one creed, or if the province is divided into large sections whose residents are largely one creed, there would be a possibility that one or more of the four types of religious education programs might work. That such a possibility is a remote one is indicated by the following comments: #

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# These comments are from letters received by the authors from various parts of the province.

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'... My subdivision has only two schools ... but in these two centralized schools we have seventeen different faiths represented ... as well as those who claim no religious affiliation, and atheists.'

'Any kind of uniform religious instruction is impossible in the ... School Division. There are

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Lutherans, Moravians, Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics, Russian Orthodox, Canadian Orthodox and United Church Protestants. P. S. I should add Jehovah's Witnesses.'

'... the Board felt that with so many church affiliations represented in our schools it was difficult to arrive at a basis satisfactory to all concerned.'

'It would be difficult to arrive at a course which would satisfy the religious beliefs of all families represented in the average one room country school.'

Alberta does not appear to be unique in any way which would facilitate the implementation of any one of the four common types of religious education program.

We must conclude, therefore, that religious education, as advocated, in any of the four common types of program can not be considered desirable in the public schools of Alberta, either from the standpoint of theory or practicality.

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CHAPTER X

SOME POSITIVE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS STUDY

After viewing the conclusions reached in the preceding chapter one may well ask, "If we do not believe that the types of religious education considered are practicable for Alberta, are we suggesting that religious education be left out of the schools altogether? Are the various religions of our nation, and the world, to be disregarded entirely? Are we to assume for purposes of teaching that religion is a thing apart from man's existence - that religions have had neither origins, evolutions or literature, or that knowledge of these developments is no part of a child's school life?" To these questions the authors of this thesis would like to make a qualified "No". In explanation of our answer there are a number of facts we believe should be considered.

In the first place, it is obvious to any observer that religions have long been, and still are, - for good or for ill - tremendous forces in the world. They are forces with which even the commonest man is at least slightly acquainted, and forces which his leaders are rarely able to ignore safely. Delegates to the United Nations have made us conscious of the various religious creeds represented around the conference



tables, and the allowances to be made for those beliefs; each religious group (though present through national or political choice) is proudly aware of its own religious customs, traditions and literature. In a smaller area, there are those who realize that throughout the world many peoples have each taken their separate ways of searching for deities, values, and philosophies of life. It is possible to sense man's drive towards these religious values of various kinds, to understand that man has tried many ways of finding what he believes to be the 'good life', to see how religions have affected and permeated cultures, and through these approaches to understanding something of the affinity existing among religions. To make this effort is something almost in the nature of an obligation, for in a world that is steadily 'shrinking' in size, we need to make our ideas 'larger'.

It is with this broad viewpoint, then, that we would like to suggest what Alberta schools might do in the way of religious education for their children, and what the aims, content, and dangers of such religious education might do.

We believe that any religious education in the schools should be given on a very broad, non-sectarian basis. It should include something of all main world religions - their stories, legends, literature, great



men, music, art - and should be given by the teacher as fairly and impartially as possible. The aims of education, as we understand it, are to give not only habits, skills, information, and techniques for locating information, but also a certain critical open-minded attitude towards information gained or presented. In Social Studies, for example, the school attempts to consider the evolutions and histories of governments. Information is located from various sources, studied, and conclusions drawn in the light of what seems reasonable. We suggest that the schools carry out the same aims and procedure with regard to religion, for the school exists to give historical and cultural implications in all areas, not to indoctrinate the precepts of any one area. Sectarian traditions are best kept in the spheres of home and church.

If the schools admitted religion on this basis, they would cease to omit what has been a large force in our national and international life. We could hope for a more critical open-mindedness with regard to religion. We might also hope for a greater understanding by the pupil of his own sect, and an increased tolerance of his immediate 'neighbor-sects'. Finally, if our youngsters studied a little of the social and spiritual forces of other nations as well



as their food, clothing, shelter, and machines, they might leave school with a more balanced view of society as a whole.

More specifically, we would suggest that in Grades One to Six of a child's school life he should come in contact with the legends, stories, and perhaps some of the music, from as many religious sources as possible. Through a wide selection of such material he would begin to have a broad awareness or consciousness of religions. Many of the stories, most particularly those of a Biblical nature, have a further usefulness in providing a more meaningful background for much of his school and later reading. There is hardly an area of English literature (in its broadest sense) that does not have many allusions to, or quotations from, religious leaders or religious literature. We would suggest that this phase of religious education should occur in connection with the school literature and Social Studies and not as a separately time-tabled subject. That is, the material suggested should be dealt with as it arises in its natural historical or literary context; it should not be treated in isolation or forced in artificially.

In the Intermediate grades the school should attempt to develop the previously mentioned religious



awareness into a more specific knowledge. It is in these grades that the stories of the great men of religions - Jesus, Moses, Buddha, Mohammed, Lao-tse, and the great disciples of these men, would be given. By the time Grade Nine has been reached there should be some definite knowledge of some of the separate ways in which man has searched for religious values, and how various contemporary cultures have been affected by religion. This might be accomplished by dealing with the many phases of religious activities as they arise in the context of the various subject matter fields of the Intermediate School.

In the High School, however, we think that religious education might be offered in one or two of the grades as an optional subject. The lines of activity begun in the Elementary and Intermediate Schools could be carried on. This background material, and some examination of basic religious literature, might form a core for a discussion course which would be largely socially oriented. In the light of their knowledge of religions, and of contemporary conditions, pupils might attempt to approach individual and social problems related to conduct and philosophy. If the attitude of a critical (that is, constructively critical, not cynical) open-mindedness has been created



and maintained throughout school life, then such a procedure should be far from impossible.

The difficulties and dangers of the proposed plan are very obvious. It is evident that such a course requires far more forethought, preparation of material, and impartiality, than any of the four religious education schemes previously discussed and dismissed. The course materials should be drawn up by the ablest people available only after very careful consideration of a large subject-matter field. Comprehensive teacher guides would have to be constructed and many hints to do with the handling of material inserted in the general Course of Studies. The teachers themselves would need a great deal of preparation, either through University courses or private reading.

It is, however, in the handling of the course that all possible precautions need to be taken. The individual teacher can 'break' the course far more easily than he or she can 'make' it, and for that reason is by far the most important person concerned. It is through the teacher that the plan is open to abuses of various kinds, such as an attempt to inculcate particular sectarian ideas. This is dangerous because such a procedure defeats the broad aims of both the school and the original course. In addition, it brings disrespect for both the teacher



and the sectarian ideas emphasized, for school children are very sensitive to partiality - especially when both teacher and course set out to be 'impartial'. As well, community reaction to prolonged sectarian detours might endanger the continuance of the course in the school program. In connection with community reaction there is also the real danger that elements within the community, unable to see any immediate benefits of the non-sectarian plan, would become a pressure group for wholesale sectarian religious education. Thus the non-sectarian plan might eventually become a wedge for the entry of 'improvements'.

Because of the dangers and difficulties outlined, we suggest that, if such a religious education scheme as we propose were initiated, it be tried first of all in not more than ten schools in the province. In this way community co-operation and reaction, and teacher experience, could be assessed. Through the information thus gained the original plan would be confirmed, modified, or rejected before it was attempted on a large scale. The experiment might well occupy at least ten years.

Thus, although we do not agree that sectarian religion has a place in the school, we feel that religion, generally speaking, cannot be ignored.



The outline just presented is, we believe, in spite of its dangers, a partial answer to this recognition of religion.

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APPENDIX I

NATIONAL BASIC OUTLINE OF RELIGIOUS  
INSTRUCTION

1. - PRIMARY

(a) Infants (5 - 7)

- Scope A. Stories illustrative of God's care; parables of nature; God's provision for food, clothing and shelter for man and beast.
- B. Stories of Jesus. These would be chosen to show His ~~home~~ life; His deeds of kindness and His love of children.
- C. Stories from the Old Testament which illustrate how God's love and care helped those who became great men, e.g., Joseph, Moses, Samuel.
- D. Similar stories from other times and other lands.
- E. Memorisation of appropriate sentences or short passages from the Bible.

Method

Narration of stories by the teacher. The presentation should be of a kind which will preserve the joy of the story. Teaching which stresses the memorising of facts should be used sparingly.

The usual methods employed in Infant's schools should be fully used, such as the use of pictures, plays and free dramatisation, and other forms of expression work.



Use should be made of the festivals during the year, e.g., Christmas, Easter, Whitsuntide, Harvest.

(b) Junior (7 to 11)

- Scope
- A. Stories of Jesus. These would be chosen so that an outline of the whole of the Story of Jesus would be covered during the first three years. During the last year the Life of Christ as given in St. Mark's Gospel might be taken.
  - B. Stories Jesus would hear of great men and women of his own country at various stages of the nation's history, showing the part they played, how they served their fellow men and how they were inspired by their belief in God and His purpose as they understood it.
  - C. Stories from the New Testament to illustrate how Christianity spread through the adventures and travels of its early preachers and heroes.
  - D. Stories of the followers of Jesus who have served their fellow men in different countries and at various periods of history.
  - E. Memorisation and choral speaking of suitable passages.

Method During this stage there will be a gradual transition from stories which appeal mainly to the imagination, and an increasing emphasis on historical fact.



Opportunities for activities should be provided by dramatisation and other forms of expression work, including pictorial representation, modelling and written work.

While oral work will play the most important part, children should be encouraged to read the stories as given in the Bible.

Memory work should be included, but more time might be given to choral speaking to enable children to become familiar with appropriate passages from the Bible.

## II. - SECONDARY

### (a) First Stage (11 to 15)

- Scope
- A. The Bible viewed as a continuous record of God's unfolding purpose and man's response to it.
  - B. The life and teaching of Jesus Christ.
  - C. The spread of Christianity and its influence upon the life of various countries at different periods of history.
  - D. The fundamental beliefs of Christianity; this may include comparisons with the beliefs of other religions.
  - E. Memorisation and choral speaking of great passages from the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Apocrypha.



With so comprehensive an outline of work the temptation will be to attempt too much. This is to be avoided for two reasons - (i) the teacher may be so anxious to cover the scheme of work that pupils are unable to grasp what they are studying; (ii) the pupils may acquire a distaste for the subject and look forward to dropping it when they leave school.

The problem is therefore to devise a scheme of work which will afford sufficient basic knowledge and permit of sufficient time for this to be assimilated. Omission is as important as inclusion in the formulation of a good scheme.

There will be a four years' course which should be a unified one. In its formulation account will necessarily be taken of the developing capacity of pupils. The methods of organising the course may differ. In some schools the concentric method will no doubt be followed, by which each year's work, dealing with the Old Testament, the Life of Christ and the spread of Christianity will be planned as a unit. In other schools the course will be consecutive for the four years, probably falling into two parts for the years 11 to 13 and 13 to 15 years respectively. But whatever method may be adopted, it is important that the New Testament should not be omitted from



any year's work and that the balance of the course as indicated in A-E above should be maintained.

The fact that many children will leave school at the end of this period will obviously have an important bearing on the shaping of the course. Opportunities should be afforded for dealing adequately with inquiries; and provision should be made for the discussion of religious and ethical problems which may arise. At no stage should the teaching be divorced from the life of the pupils; on the contrary, its application to their everyday experiences should be regarded as an inherent part of the scheme of work. Special care should be taken to see that for those who are leaving school the later part of the course includes some preparation for the problems they will meet when they enter industry or commerce.

(b) Second Stage (16 to 18)

In the later years of school life (i.e., 16 to 18) the scheme of study and instruction will be determined by the consideration of the needs and interests of the pupils. In addition to having regard to the pupil's stage of development and to his growth in knowledge and experience account will have to be taken of his other studies. To some extent these will influence his



approach to the study of the Scriptures, and of religious topics generally, and special measures may be necessary to achieve the desired coordination of various aspects of knowledge and experience.

In these circumstances there cannot but be at this stage a wide variety in the methods of approach to the study of the Scriptures and of religious questions. It is suggested that material should be drawn from the following: -

1. The study of the Bible and the growth of Christianity.
2. The Bible, its origin and growth, how the various books came to be written, and why they were selected.
3. The history of the English Bible and its influence on literature and civilisation.
4. The development of the conception of God in the Bible and in Christian thought.
5. The study of St. John's Gospel and of the Epistles of St. Paul.
6. The problems of the Bible - inspiration the truth of the Bible, the historical accuracy of the Gospels, the Bible and science, miracles, progressive revelation.
7. Problems of personal and social ethics.
8. The influence of Christianity and of the Christian fellowship in the world today.



9. The history of Christianity in Great Britain  
with particular reference to the last 300 years.
10. Christianity and other religions.

### Method

At the secondary stage there will be a transition from story to history, and the pupil's reading of the Bible should be planned with this aim in view.

For teaching purposes the Revised Version of the Bible is preferable to the Authorised, especially in reference to the Old Testament; and for purposes of interpretation, modern versions have their value.

In the early years narration will still play an important part. But as the period progresses the reading of the Bible itself by the pupils should be given a larger place. At first it might be taken in preparation for, or as supplementary to, narration. In successive years, however, Bible reading should provide more and more possibilities for discussion. The fullest use should be made of opportunities to associate religious instruction with work in other subjects; and methods usually considered appropriate with pupils of this age in the study of such subjects should be used.

The spirit of enquiry should be welcomed, stimulated and fostered. The aim of the teacher at this period



especially should be to arouse and sustain such an interest in the subject that pupils will continue their study of it when school days are over. #

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# "A National Basic Outline of Religious Instruction", a bulletin prepared by a Committee of Representatives of The Joint Conference of Anglicans and Free Churchmen, the Association of Education Committees and the National Union of Teachers. (July, 1945). pp. 9-12. Copies may be obtained from the N.U.T. Office, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London, W.C.1. .

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